



Central
Coast
Council

MAINTAINING SERVICES AND RATES

Communication Materials and Information



Details of the activities undertaken within each Phase is detailed in the table below and samples of communication and information materials follows.

Method	Activity	Outcome and reach
Phase 1 - Community awareness and information (September to December 2021)		
Mailout of Coast Connect quarterly newsletter or digital version sent to all residential and business ratepayers in October 2021 with the second quarter rates notice to inform on what Council was planning to do.	Following Council's decision on 28 September 2021 to notify IPART of its intended proposal. The newsletter included details on where to find more information via Council's online engagement platform, yourvoiceourcoast.com and register interest to participate in ongoing community consultation.	121,000 ratepayers
Maintaining services and rates website page live from 28 September 2021. This outlined all stages of the community awareness and engagement program at Council's online engagement platform, yourvoiceourcoast.com	Content updated throughout stages of community awareness and engagement program and included frequently asked questions, fact sheets and links to the online community survey.	21,405 website page visits between 28 September and 15 December 2021 with 35,214 page views and 8,146 document downloads. Represents an average 268 website visits per day.
Media releases issued on 28 September and 22 November 2021 generating media interviews.	Information about stages of consultation, how to participate and provide feedback and responding to media enquiries for more information.	Generated media coverage across local print, digital, television news and radio media outlets.
Newspaper advertorial inclusion in six weekly Coast Connect in local Coast Community Newspapers since October 2021	Information about stages of consultation, how to participate, survey open and provide feedback.	Estimated reach of 54,000 weekly with distribution at local shopping centres, community facilities and retail outlets.

Method	Activity	Outcome and reach
Social media posts and animation campaign across Council and the Administrator Facebook page targeting local residents and ratepayers	Information about the proposal, promotion of survey and providing direct link to youvoiceourcoast.com page	Social media campaign reach of 210,523 in November 2021.
Story inclusion in seven weekly Coast Connect newsletters distributed to around 12,000 subscribers.	Information about stages of consultation, how to participate, survey open and provide feedback	29 September; 3, 17, 24 November and 1, 10 & 16 December 2021 Average opening rate of 27.5%
Direct email sent to 8,549 recipients including community groups and associations on 25 November 2021	Information about stages of consultation, how to participate, survey open and provide feedback.	8,549 recipients
Customer query responses – Special Variation	Individual responses to direct customer queries through Service Request process. Trending queries utilised to update the FAQs online Email or written submissions were imported and processed through the Service Request System and are included in this figure.	71 responses in total.
Customer phone enquiries – Rates and Water Billing	Customer Enquiries all channels phone, online, in person or through online contact centre service request between 1 October - 17 December 2021. Please note: we do not have separate reporting for General Rates and Water Rates.	1734 resident contacts seeking billing information, enquiry on rates, copy of account status, copy of rates or water notice, overdue rates information. 299 resident arrangements to pay.

Method	Activity	Outcome and reach
Staff communication via newsletters, intranet content and CEO video messages, and face-to face group meetings for all Council staff since October 2021	Information about stages of consultation, likely impacts of proposal and answering staff queries	Weekly
Business leaders' forum held face-to-face on 27 October 2021	Representing the regional and local business chambers, tourism industry, surf lifesaving, Coast Shelter and Darkinjung Land Council. Meet with business leaders to explain the current financial situation and proposed response	11 attendees
Community group and individual meetings with the Administrator and CEO in November and December	Face-to-face meetings with information provided on financial situation, recovery plan progress and open discussion on Council's proposed application to IPART.	34 people attended 9 Administrator Open Office face-to-face meetings and 364 people attended an additional 8 face-to-face Community Association and other group meetings with Administrator. There have been 48 email submissions received and responded to.
Community Reference Group	Group of 16 residents formed through an independent process and managed by external research company.	Met 3 times from November 2021 to January 2022

Method	Activity	Outcome and reach
Phase 2 – Consultation (November -December 2021)		
Representative community telephone and reconnect online survey administered by an external research company conducted in November 2021	Explored awareness of Council's financial difficulties; exploration of usage and satisfaction in services and whether future investment should be more / same / less; and identification of services that could be reduced, if they needed to be.	Telephone survey with 744 respondents and online recontact survey with 336 of the telephone survey respondents
Opt-in community online survey administered by an external research company and conducted from 22 November to 13 December 2021	Content similar to the above survey and open for anyone to complete	722 respondents

Method	Activity	Outcome and reach
Phase 3 – Public exhibition IP&R documents (22 December 2021-21 January 2022)		
Media releases issued on 13 and 20 December 2021 & 20 January 2022 generating media interviews.	Information about the Extraordinary Council Meeting and how the community can provide feedback about the proposed scenarios on public exhibition	Generated media coverage across local print, digital, television news and radio media outlets.
Newspaper advertorial inclusion in two weekly Coast Connect in local Coast Community Newspapers since December 2022	Information about how to provide feedback about the proposed scenarios on public exhibition	Estimated reach of 54,000 weekly with distribution at local shopping centres, community facilities and retail outlets.
Social media posts and animation campaign across Council Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter pages targeting local residents and ratepayers	Information about the IP&R documents and how to provide feedback about the proposed scenarios on public exhibition and providing direct link to youvoiceourcoast.com page	Reach of 53,567 Facebook followers; 9,100 LinkedIn followers and 6,240 Twitter followers
Story inclusion in two weekly Coast Connect newsletters distributed to around 12,000 subscribers	Information about the IP&R documents and how to provide feedback about the proposed scenarios on public exhibition and providing direct link to youvoiceourcoast.com page	23 December 2021 and 19 January 2022. Average opening rate of 25.7%
Maintaining services and rates website page at Council's online engagement platform, youvoiceourcoast.com	Content updated with three new pages for each of the IP&R documents and an online submission form for feedback. Also, an online rates brochure explaining the scenarios and an explanatory video.	5,065 website page visits between 20 December 2021 and 21 January 2022 with 9,237 page views and 1,754 document downloads. Represents an average 153 website visits per day.

Method	Activity	Outcome and reach
Mailout of Coast Connect quarterly newsletter or digital version sent to all residential and business ratepayers in February 2022 with the third quarter rates notice to update about Council's proposal	The newsletter included an update on Council's financial recovery plan and details on where to find more information via Council's online engagement platform, yourvoiceourcoast.com to stay up to date with any further opportunities to provide feedback.	121,000 ratepayers
Staff communication via newsletters, intranet content and CEO video messages	Information about the stage of the proposal and addressing staff concerns about job insecurity.	Fortnightly
Letter to stakeholder groups advising of IPART process for submission and Extraordinary Council Meeting on 3 February 2022.	Information about the proposal	Ongoing response to queries

Phase 1 - Community awareness and information materials examples

Newsletter to 121,000 ratepayers. October 2021

Administrator message

It is important for us to examine rates again and for our community to make an informed choice about maintaining services and service standards for the future of the Central Coast.



In less than three years' time we will be facing an average annual income loss of \$25.8million over the next 7 years and this means we will be forced to reduce or cease many services. We are proposing to make an application to IPART to maintain the current level of rates for a further seven years, consistent with what we asked for from IPART earlier this year.

There has been major restructuring of Council and Council is on track to achieve the \$50million in cost savings including productivity gains. Together with the recent rate increase, Council is budgeting for a small surplus this financial year.

Council is on track to be able to continue to service its community. However, we face falling off an income cliff if the current level of rates is not maintained.

If the Special Variation is not extended, in two years ratepayers will be given a 13 percent reduction in their general rate component and Council will need to adjust its cost structures by a further \$25.8million annually on average to cope with that reduction.

The community will have a major say in whether this application is successful. We will undertake a community consultation exercise so the community can provide input to whether they would prefer to continue to pay the current level of rates or receive a reduction and see a dramatic fall off in services. You need to be aware of what the implications of this reduction in Council income will mean on the services you use daily.

I urge you to keep an open mind, inform yourself and consider the information, and to provide feedback over the coming months before Council determines in early February whether or not to formally apply to IPART for a Special Variation.

If you would like to raise any matters, please email my office at theadministrator@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au

Rik Hart
Administrator, Central Coast Council

I want to have a say

That's fantastic! We want to hear from you.

Register your interest to find out how to participate.
Go to www.yourvoiceourcoast.com

Who are IPART

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) is an independent authority that determines how much Council can charge for rates and the annual increase or 'rate peg', which is 2% for 2021-22. A special variation is a change to the amount Council can charge for rates and can only be implemented if approved by IPART.

How is this different to water, sewerage and stormwater drainage prices?

IPART also regulates the prices that we can charge for water, sewerage and stormwater drainage prices and this is a separate process. IPART has commenced its own community consultation about Council's pricing proposal that was submitted to IPART in September 2021. For more information, including instructions on how to make a formal submission to IPART, visit yourvoiceourcoast.com

It is important to remember that every dollar that we receive from your water, sewerage and stormwater drainage rates can only be spent on water, sewerage and stormwater drainage services such as water mains renewals, the upgrade of water and sewer treatment plants and stormwater management to ensure the ongoing health of our waterways.

Rebates and hardship assistance

- Pensioners may be eligible for a rebate on their rates notice and water account.
- We can also assist those having trouble paying rates or water accounts on time with hardship assistance.
- Find out if you are eligible and apply – search 'rates' on Council's website.

Contact Us

Online Customer Service Centre at
www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au
Telephone: 1300 463 954

October 2021



Securing the future of the Central Coast

This is an update on Council's plans to continue discussions about its services so we can:

- better understand the community view on what services are important
- define community expectations around service levels
- respond to this in a future rate proposal.

What has happened so far

In May 2021 the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) approved a temporary rate increase of 13% plus 2% rate peg which is retained in the rate base for three years and removed from the rate base at the end of the 2023-24 rating year for the Central Coast Local Government Area.

This temporary one-off increase will provide \$22.9M in additional income for the 2021-22 financial year and is one of a number of measures being implemented to ensure Council remains financially sustainable.

In their final report issued in May 2021 IPART stated, "During this 3-year period, the council will be able to implement its proposed business recovery plan, consult with its ratepayers regarding appropriate service levels, and if required, apply for a permanent Special Variation."

Council has notified IPART of its intention to apply to maintain this temporary Special Variation (SV) beyond its expiry in June 2024 for a further seven years. At this stage, Council is not proposing to seek a permanent variation.

The next step is to explore with ratepayers the option to maintain the current temporary rate variation for a further seven years through a community awareness and engagement program from October 2021 through to January 2022. This community feedback will help inform whether or not Council decides to formally apply to IPART for a Special Variation in February 2022.

What did Council do

In December 2020 and January/February 2021, Council consulted extensively with the community on options for new residential and business rates to begin in the 2021/22 financial year. The proposals addressed long term financial sustainability. This included the legal obligation for Council to reimburse the restricted funds that had been spent without the correct authorisation on projects that the community had benefited from.

At the same time, Council informed the community about the impacts of rate harmonisation to address the inequity between the rates of the two former local Councils in response to the State Government requirement of amalgamated Councils. Rate harmonisation was implemented from 1 July 2021 ensuring there is now equity in how rates are charged across the whole of the Central Coast region.

What did we hear from the community

Over 10,000 community responses to an online survey, telephone survey and direct submissions were received in response to Council's proposal about a new rating structure. The levels of community support and reasons for and against a rate rise were established through this consultation. The majority of respondents did not support the proposal.

More broadly, the engagement process affirmed that the community wanted Council to 'fix the problem', maintain services and create a sustainable pathway forward for Council. The community was supportive of change to see better financial management and accountability put in place. They also wanted to see that they were not shouldering the burden of fixing the problem and that other things were being done as alternatives to a rate increase such as seeking NSW government funds, selling assets, reducing staff, reducing capital works and scaling back services and expenditure in general.

You can read the full summary of the consultation at yourvoiceourcoast.com.



How have we responded to community feedback

We have moved quickly to show that we are serious about helping to fix the problem. Here is what we have done so far.

Better financial management and accountability

- ✓ Chief Financial Officer appointment
- ✓ Audit and Risk Committee meet every two months
- ✓ Monthly financial reporting publicly available
- ✓ Tighter budget management controls

Reduced spending

- ✓ Capital works program reduced to \$175M in 2020-21 compared to \$242M in 2019-20
- ✓ Materials and contracts savings estimate of \$20M
- ✓ Reduced employee costs by \$30M
- ✓ Management salaries with reduction of nine Directors to five and senior managers from 38 to 25

Other financial recovery actions

- ✓ Over \$60M of property assets sold
- ✓ Improved productivity with minimum service level reduction despite staff cuts
- ✓ Bank loans secured and payments on track
- ✓ Finding other revenue sources.

What is the proposal now

Council is proposing to ensure financial and service sustainability by proposing to maintain its current rate income beyond 2023-24 for a further seven years. This is so that we can maintain the current service levels, continue to find more service efficiencies and pay back loans.

We want to explore this option with you through our community awareness and engagement program from October 2021 through to January 2022.

What happens if the proposal is not approved

Council provides over 250 services that you value and these services contribute to the quality of life that is desired on the Central Coast.

If Council's current rate income is not maintained beyond June 2024, we will be forced to reduce or cease many services.

This means that we will be unable to maintain some assets at current levels resulting in poorer condition standards; facilities and amenities will deteriorate more quickly such as public toilets, sporting grounds and surf clubs; and some facilities may even need to close such as childcare centres and libraries. There will be strained service quality in other areas and Council will not have discretionary funds to support some community and environmental initiatives. Reducing or ceasing services will also impact staffing and likely mean further staff cuts resulting in local jobs lost on the Central Coast.

It is important to note that returning to a pre-2021 rate base does not mean that former Gosford ratepayers will pay less rates again. The impacts of the State Government mandated rates harmonisation which was undertaken in 2020-21 will not be wound back.

[Home](#) > [Maintaining services and rates](#)

Maintaining services and rates

This project is currently open for consultation.

What is the proposal for the community

Council is proposing to maintain its current rate income beyond 2023-24 for a further 7 years to ensure financial and service sustainability. Securing the current rate income for a further 7 years will ensure that we can maintain the current service levels, continue to find more service efficiencies and pay back loans.

We will be exploring this option with you through our community awareness and engagement program from October 2021 through to January 2022. This program will allow us to:

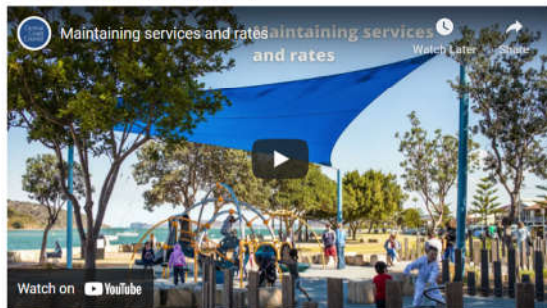
- Better understand the community view on what services are important
- Define community expectations around the service levels
- Respond to this in a future rate proposal



Have your say

The community are now invited to view the [Maintaining Services and Rates Brochure](#) and provide feedback on the below documents currently on exhibition until 21 January 2021:

- [Delivery Program \(Operational Plan\)](#)
- [Resourcing Strategy](#)
- [Community Strategic Plan \(CSP\)](#)



[View The Maintaining Services And Rates Brochure](#)

Links

- 🔗 [Have your say - Delivery Program \(Operational Plan\)](#)
- 🔗 [Have your say - Resourcing Strategy](#)
- 🔗 [Have your say - Community Strategic Plan \(CSP\)](#)
- 🔗 [Securing your future with a rate rise](#)
- 🔗 [Planning our water future](#)
- 🔗 [Rates Harmonisation - Overview and FAQs](#)
- 🔗 [Financial Recovery Plan](#)

Document Library

- 📎 [Maintaining Services and Rates Brochure](#) (7.54 MB)
- 📎 [Productivity Improvements Fact Sheet](#) (183.49 KB)

Find out more

What has happened so far

What did Council do

What did we hear from the community

How have we responded to community feedback

What happens if the proposal is not approved

Community Reference Group

FAQs

Have Council rates recently increased?

Who is IPART and what do they do?

What action has Council taken to remedy its financial situation?

Did Council have to secure commercial bank loans?

What is the annual budget for Central Coast Council?

What is the difference between restricted and unrestricted funds?

The merger was supposed to improve things, but this does not seem to have happened. What's going on?

There are limited Council services in my area, why should I be part of this?

How are you ensuring that the financial situation doesn't happen in the future?

Is Council still spending money on building new things?

Can't you get more funding from the government to help pay for things?

How long will it take to get Council finances back in order?

Why are there only two options being considered – maintain rates or

Timeline View

Initial investigation and research

Phase 1 community consultation

- Community awareness through direct mail and online information commences

Phase 2 – Engagement on service levels and options

- Face to Face Community groups 1:1 Meetings with Administrator
- Telephone Survey (randomly selected ratepayers)
- Online Survey (opt in)
- Community feedback on services and options – Community Reference Group

Phase 3 – Public exhibition of Long Term Financial Plan and Delivery Program (two options) (we are here)

- Consultation on the Delivery Program and Long Term Financial Plan

Community feedback on two options reviewed

Council decides whether to make a submission to IPART

Ask us a question

Please contact us at:

E: ask@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au

T: 1300 463 954

Productivity improvements Fact Sheet



Getting our house in order

Council has taken decisive actions in a short space of time since uncovering its financial problems in November 2020. We have implemented measures to manage costs including significant staff reductions, restrictions of spending and reducing capital works programs (such as infrastructure and IT systems); selling property assets and obtained emergency bank loans to reimburse the restricted funds that had been spent unlawfully on projects that the community had benefited from. We have done everything we can behind the scenes to reduce costs without largely impacting on the services we deliver for the community.

Diagram 1. Council actions to fix the financial problem



Productivity improvements Fact Sheet



These cost management measures made up 70% of what we needed to do to satisfy the external lenders that we were getting Council finances back on track. The other 30% came from the temporary 13% (plus 2% rate peg) rate increase approved by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) in May 2021. This temporary increase is for three years only. The external loans are the backbone of our recovery and we are required to repay these within 10 years. To do this and continue to be able to deliver services at the current level, Council is proposing to apply to maintain the current rates for an additional seven years, or ten years in total.

Productivity improvements

Productivity improvements have also been made through better management of staff time; purposeful equipment to help staff do their job efficiently; and our technological progression coming to fruition with our staff benefiting from using upgraded technology systems and transitioning manual processes into digital ones. This means we have stopped some clunky and inefficient processes. These productivity improvements have ensured the necessary cost-cutting measures have meant minimal service reductions for the community. Some of these productivity gains will continue to have an ongoing positive impact on improved service delivery and the community will see the benefits year on year.

In a nutshell, we continually strive to be more productive, so we can use those 'saved hours of staff time' to deliver an improved service level for our community.

Diagram 2. Balancing costs reduction with productivity improvements.

Productivity improvements continually rebalances any cost cutting measures to ensure minimal service level impacts.



Cost cutting measures risk reducing service levels.

Snapshot of productivity improvements

Consolidating services to make it easier for our customers and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One customer call centre reduced from two, providing one single phone number and point of contact• One rates management system, policy and procedures, following two rating systems being brought together• One main administration office building location reducing administrative overheads, with the future sale of Gosford administration building• One contract to manage three Animal Care Facilities instead of three different contracts• One pay cycle for staff, replacing five pay cycles and duplicated processes• One Local Environment Plan and Development Control Plan progressing, meaning already simpler development application administration processes and systems (2022 completion)• One provider for waste collection service, instead of two contracts continues to provide ongoing benefits• One provider for the transport and processing of garden organics and sewage biosolids, instead of five contracts continues to provide ongoing benefits• Capital works internal committee for one way of managing capital program and budget• Single road pavement inspection process to improve road pavement hazard identification• One Asset Management System removed multiple databases and reduced IT software license fees• Better maintenance work order system to save time scheduling maintenance activities and record cost per activity• Reduced number of fleet vehicles from 1021 to 641 since 2018• One program for beach safety service reduced from two, providing single contract with Surf Lifesaving CC and consistent service for all 15 surf clubs across the coast• Annual cost savings since Council resumed management of three former YMCA leisure facilities in 2017• One library back of house operations location, instead of four locations• Region wide Bike Plan and Pedestrian Access & Mobility Plan in place to inform and prioritise pathway linkages, instead of reviewing individual sections at different times	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Central Coast Civil Works Specification to standardise consistent delivery and maintenance of roads, drainage and pathways to reduce asset lifecycle costs, and ensure assets reach their required useful life• One rolling ten-year road and drainage capital works program instead of multiple programs of work• One single road and drainage asset register instead of multiple systems
	Technological progression benefitting our customers and staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Changing multiple, similar software systems to single systems• Utilising fit-for-purpose technology to improve services• Rationalising back-office functions by removing duplicated internal processes and manual work-around tasks• Improving data quality, reporting and analysis of activities• Saving staff time to be reallocated to other functions. Examples:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Library App to access library resources from mobile devices, reducing staff transactions- Asset Maintenance Management System to better utilise staff time for inspections and produce defects reports- Field technology instead of paper-based assessments for low risk works and- Key stroke generator software automatically loads fees and charges instead of manual input- Single system for field staff to check if a sports field is being used each day to reduce lost time by turning up to facilities that are being used- Partially automated preparation of Flood Certificates- Utilised industry leading technology to complete full network road and pathway audit with information being used to better plan future maintenance work programs- GPS data helping drive Plant and Fleet efficiencies and optimise monthly fuel tax credit (FTC) claims- Scheduling software for light vehicle drivers to easier book maintenance- Desktop booking software and electronic key cabinets facilitated new centralised car-share scheme, giving staff easy access to pooled vehicles for use on a short-term casual basis
	Purposeful equipment so staff time is managed well	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Robot line marking machine for sports field marking, saving staff time• Higher efficiency mowing equipment with higher speeds and wider cutting decks to reduce the time per scheduled mowing service• All weather air condition mowers means less staff down time due to weather conditions e.g. dust, heat, rain

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New sports fields, parks and playgrounds turfed with low slow growing couch turf minimising ongoing maintenance time Improved out of season preparation works for open space areas e.g. mulching around tree bases to maximise mowing by high efficient ride on mowers and reduce manual whipper snipping and push mowing time Remote operation of floodlighting and irrigation for some sporting facilities saving staff call out times New turf management chemical to better maintain sports field turf helping to reduce frequency of maintenance Accelerated upskilling in new collaborative technology, means the uptake has been highly optimised and benefits stay in place post-pandemic Conference and instant messaging software upgraded and continues to have positive collaborative benefits beyond enabling staff to work from home Maintenance management system (REFLECT) for proactively scheduling inspections and capturing asset defects Plans underway to establish permanent program of reuse/repurpose/recycle materials in construction of road and drainage capital works (minimise use of virgin material) LED streetlight replacement program creating ongoing energy cost savings and benefit of smart controls (supported by NSW Government) Default public litter hutch removed individually custom manufacturing of hutch types resulting in bulk purchase benefits
"BetterWays" program for staff ideas benefitting our community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easy way for staff improvement ideas to be collected, investigated and put into place
More improvements scheduled over the next three years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One theatres management model being investigated for efficiencies, instead of three council theatres managed differently One public tree service system with consistent procedures and timeframes instead of two current systems One outdoor dining application and management process to replace two processes Consolidating a number of aspects of road, drainage and pavement design and overall management to create efficiencies in staff time Ten-year strategy to transition to electric light vehicles underway to stay abreast of industry trends and to reduce Council's total fleet fuel consumption rates
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One cemeteries management system combining a number of different processes

This information is current as at 8 November 2021.

Related resources

For more information visit

- [Your Voice Our Coast](#)

Ask us a question
Please contact us at:
ask@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au
1300 463 954

Media release Tuesday, 28 September 2021

Service level consultation to inform future rate proposal

Central Coast Council will commence the next stage of community consultation in its bid to maintain the current rates income beyond three years.

Council Administrator, Rik Hart said the two years of heavy losses and overspending left Council having to restructure its business and budget to produce a surplus to repay the \$150million debt over the next 10 years.

"We cannot forget, loans of \$150million were provided to Council in 2020 based on Council's financial recovery plan which included sale of assets, reduction in costs of \$50million, capping infrastructure spending and a rate increase of 13 percent plus rate peg for 10 years in order to repay the loans.

"In less than three years' time we will be facing an average annual income loss of \$25.8million over the next 7 years and this means we will be forced to reduce or cease many services.

"There has been major restructuring of Council and Council is on track to achieve the \$50million in cost savings including productivity gains. Together with the recent rate increase, Council is budgeting for a small surplus this financial year.

"Our current plan is working, and Council is on track to be able to continue to service its community. However, we face falling off an income cliff if the current level of rates is not maintained beyond June 2024. As it currently stands, if the Special Variation is not extended, in two years ratepayers will be

given a 13 percent reduction in their general rate component of the Council bill and Council will need to adjust its cost structures by a further \$25.8million annually on average to cope with that reduction.

"I believe the community values the services it receives from Council, however Council cannot maintain its level of services, or increase them, and repay its debt if it suffers a large reduction of income."

"We are proposing to make an application to IPART to maintain the current level of rates for a further seven years, consistent with what we asked for from IPART earlier this year."

Mr Hart said ultimately the community will have a major say in whether this application is successful, but they need to understand what the implications of this reduction in Council income will mean on the services that people use daily and that make the Central Coast a great place to live.

"Council will produce two long term financial plans, one showing income at the current rate structure, the second showing the loss of \$25.8million on average from year three onwards. We will undertake community consultation so the community can provide input to whether they would prefer to continue to pay the current level of rates or receive a reduction and see a dramatic fall off in services."

"I should point out, I cannot make cuts that will endanger public safety, break the law or harm the environment. As a result, many of the services that are most likely to be targeted for reductions would be those that support community life such as culture, sports, community services and economic development."

"Additionally, the ability to partner with other levels of government to construct new facilities and extend services will be greatly reduced."

Council will notify the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) of its intention to apply to maintain the temporary Special Variation (SV) implemented in the 2021/22 financial year beyond its expiry in June 2024 for a further seven years. Council will seek community feedback over the next few months before Council determines in early 2022 whether or not to formally apply to IPART for a Special Variation.

Information on how residents can participate in community consultation can be found at yourvoiceourcoast.com
ENDS

Media Release Monday, 22 November 2021

Have your say on maintaining services and rates

Council is inviting ratepayers and residents to have their say about maintaining current service levels and rates in an online survey opening today.

Council Administrator Rik Hart said Council had done everything it can behind the scenes to help Council's financial situation and now it was up to the community.

"Our financial recovery is on track, but we cannot become complacent about maintaining our long term stable financial position" Mr Hart said.

"I am proposing to make an application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to maintain the current level of rates for a further seven years, consistent with what we asked for earlier this year. This will allow us to maintain current service levels, continue to find more service

efficiencies and pay back loans from surpluses that we must generate according to our agreement with banks.

“Council delivers a huge variety of services for our community including patrolling beaches; maintaining public wharves, jetties, boat ramps and ocean baths; fixing suburban traffic issues, filling potholes, repairing road shoulders and removing debris from shared pathways; maintaining town centre amenity with cleaning and security; cleaning public toilet blocks; care and maintenance of parks, reserves and roadside vegetation; environmental programs like wrack collection in Tuggerah Lakes, water quality monitoring, weed spraying, declared pest management and bush regeneration; operating the Central Coast Stadium, holiday parks and cemeteries; supporting sporting and community associations with grants; and delivering libraries, childcare centres, recreation centres, theatres, galleries, public pools; to name a few services.”

“I encourage the community to read the information materials, keep an open mind and tell us what services you value that make the Central Coast a great place to live.

“I am keen to hear from as many residents as possible and invite all residents, businesses and community groups and associations to book an Open Office session with me,” Mr Hart said.

Upcoming Administrator Open Office session dates and times:

- Monday 22 November: 4pm
- Monday, 29 November 2pm, 4pm, 5.30pm

To make a booking, please email the Administrator's Office at theadministrator@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au

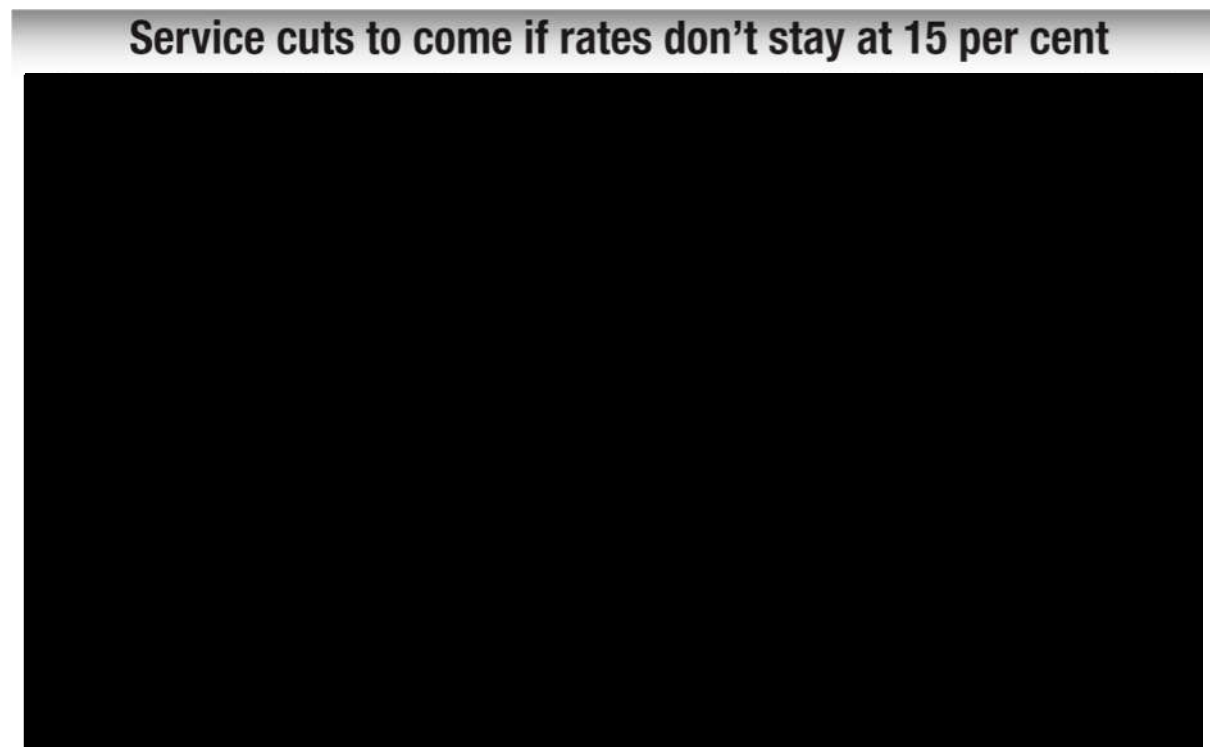
Online survey: Go to yourvoiceourcoast.com/servicesandrates

ENDS

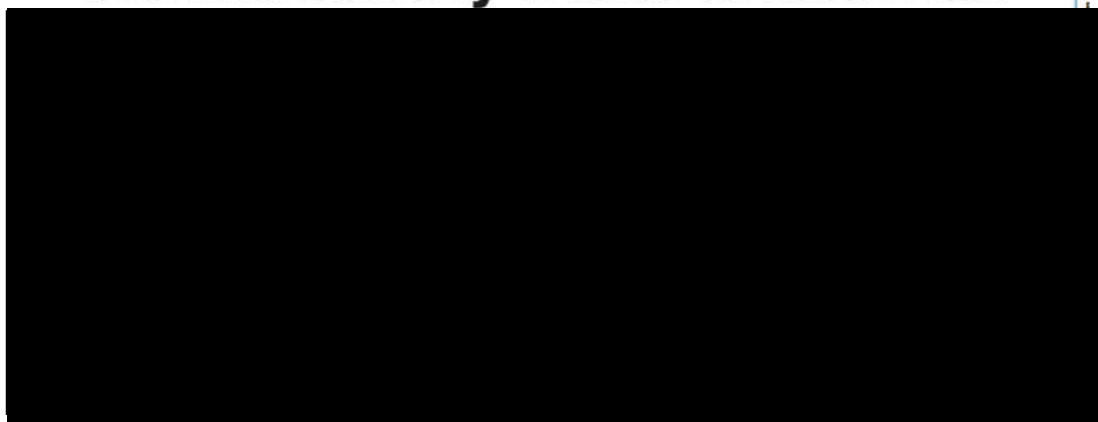
Coast Community News, 1 October 2021



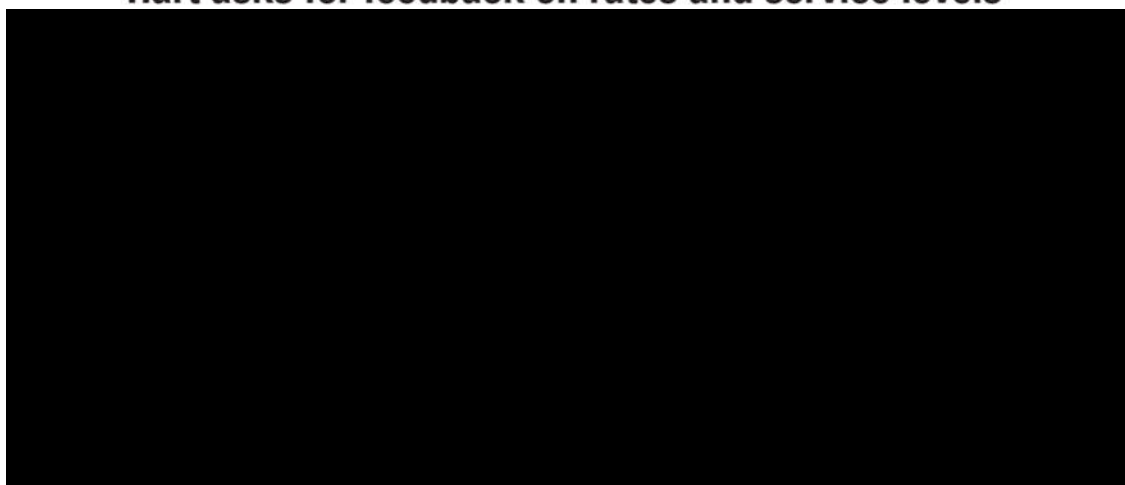
Coast Community News, 8 October 2021



“It’s like nobody wants to know us.”



Hart asks for feedback on rates and service levels



STAR Radio News – 11.00am – 24 November 2021

Central Coast ratepayers are being urged to give feedback on a proposed rate rise extension which has been lodged with IPART.

Grab(s) of Rik Hart, administrator of Central Coast Council.

ABC Central Coast Radio News – 8.30am – 24 November 2021

Central Coast Council has opened an online survey to gauge community sentiment on maintaining current rates and service levels.

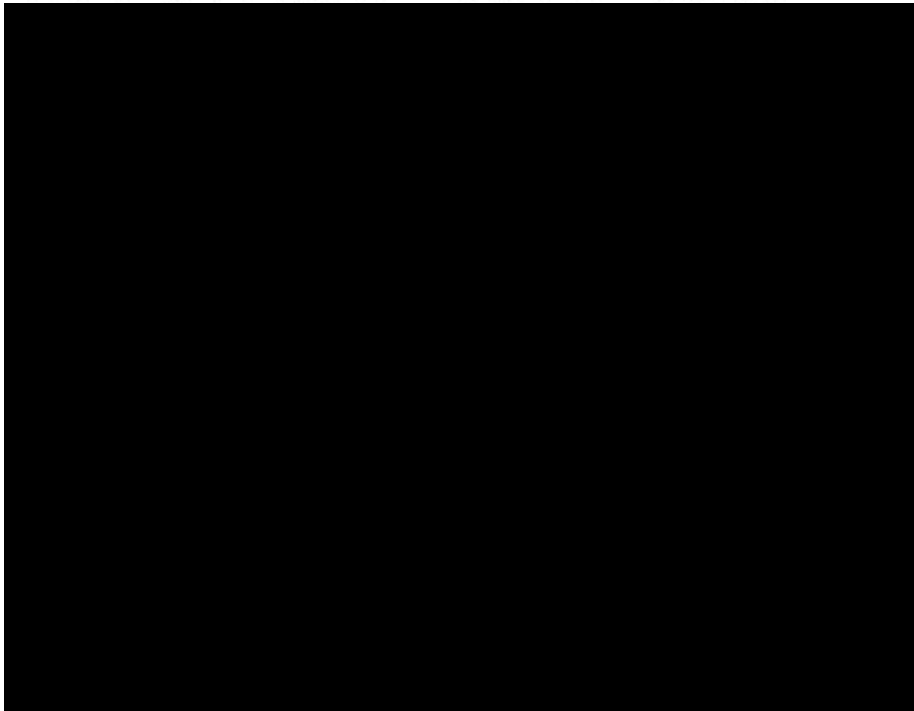
Administrator steps up campaign to extend rate rise



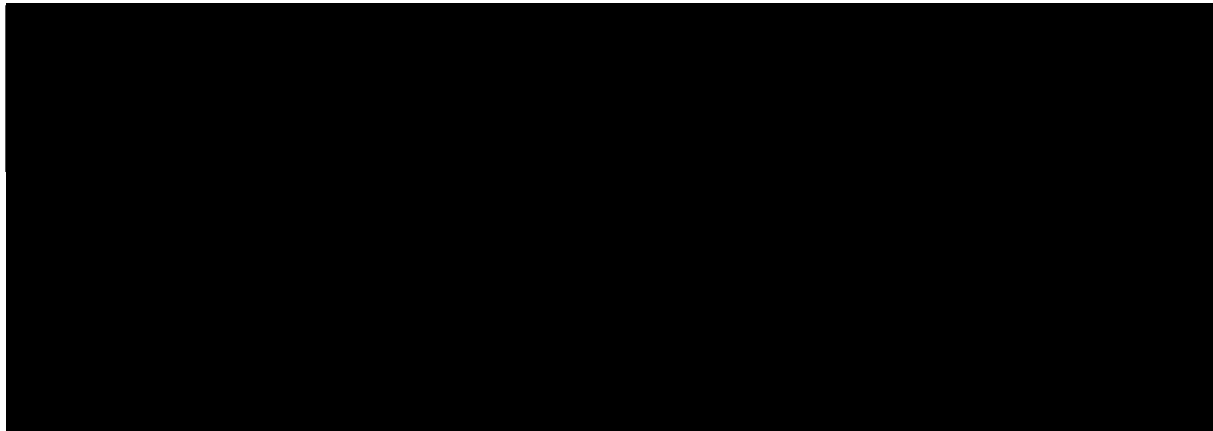
Central Coast Express Advocate, 27 November 2021

[Newslocal](#) > [Central Coast](#)

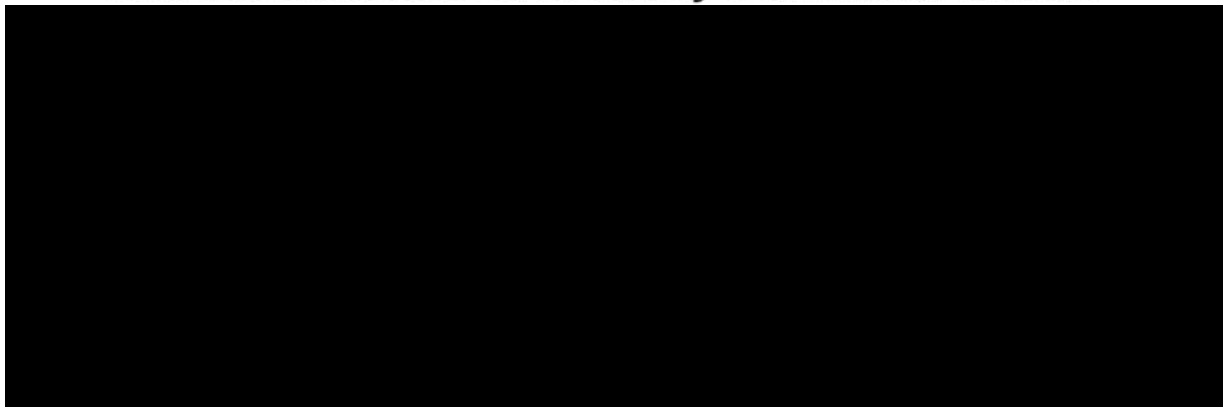
Central Coast Council's financial crisis: Land sales revealed



Audit office delays may impact Council's IPART requests



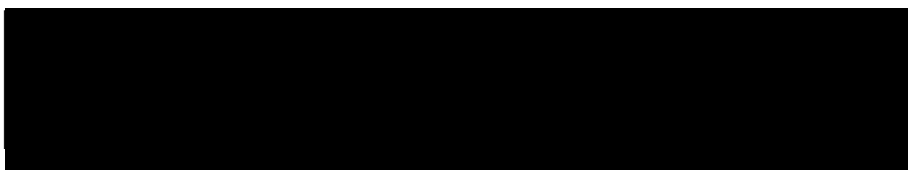
Over \$30M assets sold to satisfy commercial lenders



Central Coast Express Advocate, 15 December 2021

[Newslocal](#) > [Central Coast](#)

Central Coast Council on track to sell \$60m in asset sales



Communication examples from the Office of the Administrator

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Administrator's Message - Survey Now Open and Office Open Sessions remaining for 2021

Wednesday, 24 November 2021

Released online this week is the ability for members of the community to have their say about maintaining current service levels and rates through an online survey on [Yourvoiceourcoast.com](https://yourvoiceourcoast.com)

Council delivers a range of services for our community including patrolling beaches; maintaining public wharves; fixing suburban traffic issues; filling potholes; cleaning public toilet blocks, care and maintenance of parks, reserves; environmental programs; delivering libraries, childcare and recreation centres, theatres and public pools, to name a few.

I encourage the community to read the information materials and tell us what services you value.

To date, I've held four open sessions with members of the community, and I would like to thank those who have taken the time to meet with me. New dates have now been released, and I am keen to hear from as many residents as possible and invite all residents, businesses and community groups and associations to book an Open Office session with me. Alternatively, if you're hosting a community meeting, I am more than happy to come out to you.

Please email my office to make a booking at theadministrator@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au

See below for session dates and times. Numbers per session will be capped and your session time confirmed by return email.

Rik Hart, Administrator

Open Office session dates remaining for 2021:

Monday 29 November 2pm (virtual), 4pm (in person) & 5.30pm (in person)

Tuesday 30 November 4pm (in person) & 5.30pm (in person)

Thursday 16 December 10am (in person) & 12.30pm (in person)

Home / Council / Administrator's Column - Maintaining services and rates

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Administrator's Column – Maintaining services and rates

Wednesday, 29 September 2021

It is important for us to examine rates again and for our community to make an informed choice about maintaining services and service standards for the future of the Central Coast.

In less than three years' time we will be facing an average annual income loss of \$25.8million over the next 7 years and this means we will be forced to reduce or cease many services. We are proposing to make an application to IPART to maintain the current level of rates for a further seven years, consistent with what we asked for from IPART earlier this year.

There has been major restructuring of Council and Council is on track to achieve the \$50million in cost savings including productivity gains. Together with the recent rate increase, Council is budgeting for a small surplus this financial year.

Council is on track to be able to continue to service its community. However, we face falling off an income cliff if the current level of rates is not maintained.

If the Special Variation is not extended, in two years ratepayers will be given a 13 percent reduction in their general rate component and Council will need to adjust its cost structures by a further \$25.8million annually on average to cope with that reduction.

The community will have a major say in whether this application is successful. We will undertake a community consultation exercise so the community can provide input to whether they would prefer to continue to pay the current level of rates or receive a reduction and see a dramatic fall off in services. You need to be aware of what the implications of this reduction in Council income will mean on the services you use daily.

I urge you to keep an open mind, inform yourself and consider the information, and to provide feedback over the coming months before Council determines in early February whether or not to formally apply to IPART for a Special Variation.

Last updated : Wed 29 Sep 2021

29 October 2021 Email to community and sporting associations

SUBJECT: Maintaining rates and services: Register Now - Administrator Open Office Session

Dear Community Member,

As we begin to emerge from an extended lockdown, it is the perfect time to consider what makes the Central Coast a great place to live, work and play. We have extensive shared pathways to discover our unique town centres and villages; our beaches, lakes and bushland areas attract visitors from across the state (and hopefully soon from across Australia and the world) and our retail and restaurant precincts will soon be thriving again ready for summer.

All of the things that make the Central Coast great are supported by services provided by Central Coast Council, and that is why it is so important for the Coast to have a successful Council.

Our financial recovery is on track and we want to ensure if a new Council is elected in 2022, they are in the best possible position to make decisions for the whole community. To help achieve this, we are examining rates beyond the next three years, and we want our community to make an informed choice about maintaining services and service standards for the future of the Central Coast.

What has happened so far

In May 2021 the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) approved a temporary rate increase of 13% (plus the 2% rate peg) which is retained in the rate base for three years and removed from the rate base at the end of the 2023-24 rating year for the Central Coast Local Government Area. This means from 2024-25, we will be facing an average annual income loss of \$25.8million over the next seven years.

Our options

We are proposing to make an application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to maintain the current level of rates for a further seven years, consistent with what we asked for from IPART earlier this year. This will allow us to maintain current service levels, continue to find more service efficiencies and pay back loans.

As part of the process, we need to understand the level of support from our community for this approach and also work with our community to prioritise which services to retain, which ones to reduce and which ones to cease in the event that the rate increase is not maintained.

Business and community involvement

Leaders from business and community play an important role in sharing information and advocating on behalf of their members. I encourage you to share this information widely within your networks, so that our community is aware of the proposal and takes the opportunity to get involved in talking about services that are important to them.

Invitation to Administrator Open Office

I also invite you, and members of your group or association to book in for an Open Office session with me to share your views on this future rate proposal.

Open Office session dates and times available:

Wednesday, 10 November 1pm & 3pm

Tuesday, 16 November 1.30pm, 3pm, 5pm

Monday, 22 November 11am, 4pm

Monday, 29 November 2pm, 4pm, 5.30pm

I will meet with community members in my office at Wyong Administration Building.

To make a booking, please email the Administrator's Office at theadministrator@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au

Numbers per session will be capped and your session time confirmed by return email.

Please note Council is taking measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and all visitors to Council's Wyong Administration Building will be asked to check-in with QR Code, show proof of vaccination, and ensure physical distancing (1.5metres). Masks are required. We are asking participants not to attend if they are feeling unwell or have been in contact with someone with COVID-19.

For those who wish to meet virtually, please contact my office on the email address above for arrangements to be made.

For more information about this project visit yourvoiceourcoast.com/servicesandrates

Regards, Rik Hart
Attachment – Community Engagement Information and Supplied Materials
Administrator, Central Coast Council

Rik Hart, Administrator
December 1, 2021 · 🌐

Administrator's Message - What the Community Open Sessions is telling us - 1 December 2021

I would like to thank those community members who have participated in the open office sessions held thus far. Whilst a component of the session is structured to provide background and context to encourage a constructive discussion, there is also a section that opens up to questions and answers.

Across these sessions various issues have been raised, further clarification sought and deeper diving into key issues undertaken. I think most people left having a greater appreciation of the situation the Council is in.

Read more: <https://www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/.../administrators...>



CENTRALCOAST.NSW.GOV.AU

Administrator's Message - What the Community Open Sessions is telling us


Rik Hart, Administrator
November 24, 2021 · 🌐

Administrator's Message - Survey Now Open and Office Open Sessions remaining for 2021!

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CENTRALCOAST.NSW.GOV.AU

Administrator's Message - Survey Now Open and Office Open Sessions remaining for 2021

Rik Hart, Administrator
November 4, 2021 · 🌐

Administrator's Message - Maintaining rates and services: Register Now - Administrator Open Office Session - 4 November 2021

Our financial recovery is on track and we want to ensure if a new Council is elected in 2022, they are in the best position to make decisions for the whole community. To help achieve this, we are examining rates beyond the next three years, and we want our community to make an informed choice about maintaining services and service standards for the future of the Central Coast.

I am proposing to make an application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to maintain the current level of rates for a further seven years, consistent with what we asked for earlier this year. This will allow us to maintain current service levels, continue to find more service efficiencies and pay back loans.

Read More: <https://www.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/.../administrator...>

Rik Hart, Administrator
December 21, 2021 at 3:43 PM · 🌐

Administrator's Message - Next steps towards Special Variation Submission - 21 December 2021

Yesterday afternoon I held an Extraordinary Meeting of Council to adopt Council's draft Revised Community Strategic Plan, Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan, Draft Fees and Charges, Draft Long Term Financial Plan, Draft Workforce Management Strategy, and Draft Revised Asset Management Strategy for public exhibition and community submissions until Friday 21 January 2022.

I encourage the community to review the plans and consider what is required for their Council's long-term path to financial sustainability. I include here an explanatory video about the actions taken by Council since uncovering its serious financial situation.

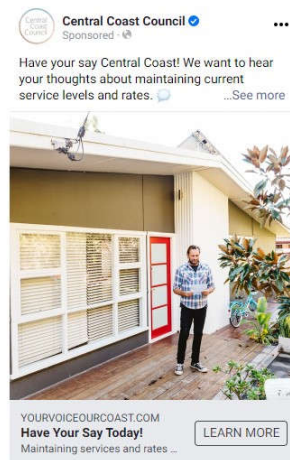
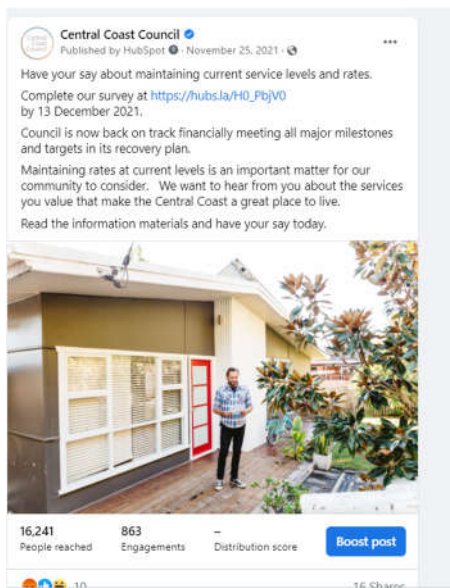
This includes a timeline about the critical decisions that had to be made and the reasons why commercial loans had to be obtained to reimburse the \$200 million in restricted funds that had been spent unlawfully on projects that the community had benefited from and to keep the business operating.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gV6rKAaPcgw>

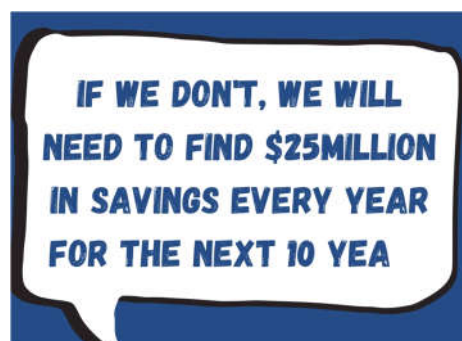
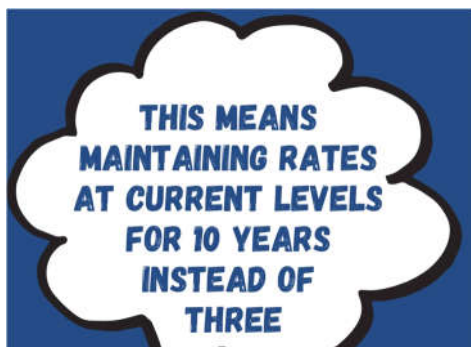


Explanatory video about Council's financial situation. Link [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gV6rKAaPcgw)

Social media post examples, November and December 2021



Social media video, November 2021





AIRPORT
ANIMALS
LIFEGUARDS
BEACHES
BINS
POOLS
POUNDS
RANGERS
REGISTRATION
ROADS
BRIDGES
BUILDING

RENOVATIONS
DEVELOPMENT
PARKING
STADIUM
CHILDCARE
WASTE COLLECTION
RECYCLING
CHILDCARE
COASTAL MANAGEMENT
DUNE CARE
CEMETRIES
PARTNERSHIPS

COMMUNITY EDUCATION
GRANTS
SPONSORSHIP
COMMUNITY PROGRAMS
YOUTH CENTRE
MEALS ON WHEELS
FOOD AND HEALTH INSPECTIONS
SWIMMING POOL INSPECTIONS
THEATRE
GALLERY
CULTURAL PROGRAMS
DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

HOLIDAY PARKS
CAMPING GROUND
CUSTOMER SERVICE
LEISURE CENTRES
TENNIS COURTS
LIBRARIES
BUSHLAND RESERVES
FIRE TRAILS
BUSHCARE
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
PARKS
SPORTS FIELDS

OUTDOOR GYMS
BIKE PATHS
DRINKING FOUNTAINS
SEATING
PLAYGROUNDS
POTHLES
KERB AND GUTTERS
ROADSIDE MOWING
SKATE PARKS
BMX TRACKS
STREET LIGHTING
STREETSCAPES

BUS SHELTERS
PLANTS
FENCING
NATURE STRIPS
ART INSTALLATIONS
PUBLIC TOILETS
TOURISM
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
DESTINATION MARKETING
GOSFORD WATERFRONT AND EMPLOYMENT LANDS
TOWN AND CITY CENTRE
STREET SWEEPING



Coast Connect

Central Coast Council's news and community information

Central
Coast
Council

From Council

It is important for us to examine rates again and for our community to make an informed choice about maintaining services and service standards for the future of the Central Coast.



There has been major restructuring of Council and Council is on track to achieve the \$50million in cost savings including productivity gains. However, we face falling off an income cliff if the current level of rates is not maintained.

If the Special Variation is not extended, in two years ratepayers will be given a 13 percent reduction in their general rate component and Council will need to adjust its cost structures by a further \$25.8million annually on average to cope with that reduction.

The community will have a major say in whether this application is successful. We will undertake a community consultation exercise so the community can provide input to whether they would prefer to continue to pay the current level of rates or receive a reduction and see a dramatic fall off in services. You need to be aware of what the implications of this reduction in Council income will mean on the services you use daily.

I urge you to keep an open mind, inform yourself and consider the information, and to provide feedback over the coming months before Council determines in early February whether or not to formally apply to IPART for a Special Variation.

Rik Hart -
Administrator, Central Coast Council



Council meeting

Find out when the next meeting is and watch it online centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/meetings

Maintaining services and rates

What has happened so far

In May 2021 the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) approved a temporary rate increase of 13% (plus the 2% rate peg) which is retained in the rate base for three years and removed from the rate base at the end of the 2023-24 rating year for the Central Coast Local Government Area.

This temporary one-off increase will provide \$22.9M in additional income for the 2021-22 financial year and is one of a number of measures being implemented to ensure Council remains financially sustainable.

In their final report issued in May 2021 IPART stated, "During this 3-year period, the council will be able to implement its proposed business recovery plan, consult with its ratepayers regarding appropriate service levels, and if required, apply for a permanent Special Variation."

Council has notified IPART of its intention to apply to maintain this temporary Special Variation (SV) beyond its expiry in June 2024 for a further seven years. At this stage, Council is not proposing to seek a permanent variation.

We will engage with the community and this feedback will help inform whether or not Council decides to formally apply to IPART for a Special Variation in February 2022.

What did Council do

In December 2020 and January /February 2021, Council consulted extensively with the community on options for new residential and business rates to begin in the 2021/22 financial year. The proposals addressed long term financial sustainability. This included the legal obligation for Council to reimburse the restricted funds that had been spent without the correct authorisation on projects that the community had benefited from.

At the same time, Council informed the community about the impacts of rate harmonisation to address the inequity between the rates of the two former local Councils in response to the State Government requirement of amalgamated Councils. Rate harmonisation was implemented from 1 July 2021 ensuring there is now equity in how rates are charged across the whole of the Central Coast region.

What we heard from the community

Over 10,000 community responses to an online survey, telephone survey and direct submissions were received in response to Council's proposal about a new rating structure. The levels of community support and reasons for and against a rate rise were established through this consultation. The majority of respondents did not support the proposal.

More broadly, the engagement process affirmed that the community wanted Council to 'fix the problem', maintain services and create a sustainable pathway forward for Council. The community was supportive of change to see better financial management and accountability put in place. They also wanted to see that they were not shouldering the burden of fixing the problem and that other things were being done as alternatives to a rate increase such as seeking NSW government funds, selling assets, reducing staff, reduction in capital works and scaling back services and expenditure in general.

You can read the full summary of the consultation at yourvoiceourcoast.com

How have we responded to community feedback

We have moved quickly to show that we are serious about helping to fix the problem. Here is what we have done so far.

Better financial management and accountability

- ✓ Chief Financial Officer appointment
- ✓ Audit and Risk Committee meet every two months
- ✓ Monthly financial reporting publicly available
- ✓ Tighter budget management controls

Reduced spending

- ✓ Capital works program reduction to \$175M in 2020-21 compared to \$242M in 2019-20
- ✓ Materials and contracts savings estimate of \$20M
- ✓ Reduced employee costs by \$30M
- ✓ Management salaries with reduction of 9 Directors to 5 and senior managers from 38 to 25

Other financial recovery actions

- ✓ Over \$60M of property assets sold
- ✓ Improved productivity with minimum service level reduction despite staff cuts
- ✓ Bank loans secured and payments on track
- ✓ Finding other revenue sources.

What is the proposal now

Council is proposing to ensure financial and service sustainability by proposing to maintain its current rate income beyond 2023-24 for a further seven years. This is so that we can maintain the current service levels, continue to find more service efficiencies and pay back loans.

What happens if the proposal is not approved

Council provides over 250 services that the community value and these services contribute to the quality of life that is desired on the Central Coast. If the Council's current rate income is not maintained beyond June 2024, we will be forced to reduce or cease many services.

It is important to note that returning to a pre-2021 rate base, does not mean that former Gosford ratepayers will pay less rates again. The impacts of the State Government mandated rates harmonisation which was undertaken in 2020-21 will not be wound back.

I want to have a say

That's fantastic!

We want to hear from you.

Register your interest to find out how to participate in the community engagement program.

Go to yourvoiceourcoast.com

Coast Connect

Central Coast Council's weekly news and community information

From Council

Our financial recovery is on track and we want to ensure if a new Council is elected in 2022, they are in the best position to make decisions for the whole community. To help achieve this, we are examining rates beyond the next three years, and we want our community to make an informed choice about maintaining services and service standards for the future of the Central Coast.

I am proposing to make an application to IPART to maintain the current level of rates for a further seven years, consistent with what we asked for earlier this year. This will allow us to maintain current service levels, continue to find more service efficiencies and pay back loans.

As part of the process, we need to understand the level of support from our community for this approach and work with our community to prioritise which services to retain, which ones to reduce and which ones to cease if the rate increase is not maintained.

I would like to invite you, and members of your group or association to book in for an Open Office session with the Administrator to share your views on this future rate proposal. See next column for session dates and times.

Rik Hart - Administrator, Central Coast Council



Administrator Open Office availability:

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Reuse and recycle on the Coast this November

November is a bumper month for community and sustainability on the Coast, with Central Coast Council celebrating National Recycling Week from 8-14 November and taking part in Garage Sale Trail across two weekends 13-14 and 20-21 November.

In addition to participating in Garage Sale Trail again in 2021 after several successful years, Council are celebrating National Recycling Week throughout November by partnering with waste provider Cleanaway to create a new e-learning platform featuring fun, interactive quizzes for all ages.

Celebrate YOUR way this National Recycling Week

To mark this year's National Recycling Week theme 'celebrate YOUR way' Council and Cleanaway have created two interactive quizzes for kids, parents and teachers alike.

Council Offices 2 Hely St Wyong / 49 Mann St Gosford | 8.30am - 5pm, Mon
NEXT ISSUE Don't miss the next issue. Sign up for our e-news at centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/enews

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Rik Hart - Administrator, Central Coast Council



Getting Council finances back on track

Council has taken decisive action since uncovering its financial problems, including obtaining emergency commercial bank loans to reimburse the restricted funds spent unlawfully on projects benefiting the community. The loans are helping us maintain current service levels, but need to be repaid within 10 years. Maintaining the current rates for 10 years means we can demonstrate to the external lenders that we are able to pay back the loans and maintain service levels for the Central Coast community.

The following diagram demonstrates how Council has approached financial recovery actions.



- Cost management measures
- Temporary 15% rate increase

Cost management measures made up of 70% of what Council needed to do to satisfy our lenders we are getting our finances back on track – including staff reductions, spending restrictions, asset sales and reducing capital works.

A temporary 15% rate increase (includes 2% rate peg) makes up the remaining 30% of our lender's requirements. The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) approved this temporary rate increase for 3 years only and Council is proposing to make an IPART application to maintain the current level of rates for a further seven years beyond their expiry in June 2024, consistent with what Council asked for earlier this year.

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I want to have a say!

We want to hear from you!
Find out more and complete the online survey now at
yourvoiceourcoast.com/servicesandrates
(closes 13 December 2021).

Council Office 2 Hely St Wyong | 8.30am - 5pm, Monday to Friday | P 1300 463 954
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Celebrate YOUR way this National Recycling Week

To mark this year's National Recycling Week theme 'celebrate YOUR way' Council and Cleanaway have created two interactive quizzes for kids, parents and teachers alike.

One is designed for primary school students' years K-6 and one for high school students in years 7-12. Quiz-takers can also go in the draw to win some amazing prizes from gift cards to recycling packs, visit learn.1coast.com.au to find out more and join in!

Get involved in Garage Sale Trail

Australia's biggest community and sustainability event, Garage Sale Trail, is happening across two weekends, Saturday 13 and Sunday 14, and Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 November 2021.

You can register your sale online today at garagesaletrail.com.au/centralcoast and access a range of resources for both in-person and virtual garage sales to ensure COVID-19 safety precautions are in place and to help get the best results from your sale.

Visit learn.1coast.com.au or garagesaletrail.com.au/centralcoast to find out more and get involved with reducing, reusing and recycling this November.



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From Council

In less than three years' we will be facing an average annual income loss of \$25.8million over the next seven years resulting in reducing or ceasing many services.

We are proposing to make an application to IPART to maintain the current level of rates for a further seven years, consistent with what we asked from IPART earlier this year.

There has been major restructuring and Council is on track to achieve the \$50million in cost savings including productivity gains. Council is budgeting for a small surplus this financial year.

However, we face falling off an income cliff if the current level of rates is not maintained.

If the SV is not extended, in two years ratepayers will be given a 13 percent reduction in their general rate component and Council will need to adjust its cost structures by a further \$25.8million annually on average to cope with that reduction.

The community will have a major say in whether this application is successful.

We will undertake consultation so the community can provide input to whether they would prefer to continue to pay the current level of rates or receive a reduction and see a dramatic fall off in services.

Rik Hart - Administrator, Central Coast Council

COVID-safe summer plans in place for beach season

The Central Coast beach season has now started. Flags up on 15 beaches will be from 9am-5pm, with Surf Life Saving patrolling on weekends and public holidays, and Council lifeguards patrolling during the week unless the beach is closed due to dangerous conditions.

Search 'beach' at centralcoast.nsw.gov.au for the latest open/closed status of Council patrolled beaches throughout the week. For further information about weekend beach conditions, visit beachsafe.org.au

Keeping our community safe

We have COVID-safe summer plans in place to manage beach crowds and potential beach closures. We have been working closely with NSW Health, Central Coast Health, the Local Emergency Operations Controller and other Councils to ensure a consistent and compliant approach to this year's season across NSW in line with the latest Public Health Orders.

We are also working with local police to monitor behaviour and penalties for not following restrictions are enforceable by police. This will continue throughout the season as the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve.

What if the beach is crowded?

We are encouraging beachgoers to exercise at quieter beaches or look to alternative locations. If

the beach looks crowded, consider coming back at another time or relaxing in a non-beach setting. Here's a few ideas to help you enjoy other natural settings:

- go for a walk or run in your local park
- ride a bike along a cycleway
- take your dog for a walk around your neighbourhood
- kick a ball at a sportsground
- head bush to hike on a nature trail or to visit a scenic spot.

Search 'recreation' at centralcoast.nsw.gov.au or visit lovecentralcoast.com if you are looking for other ideas on things to do.




Council meeting


Find out when the next meeting is and watch it online centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/meetings

Council Offices 2 Hely St Wyong / 49 Mann St Gosford | 8.30am - 5pm, Monday to Friday | P 1300 463 954

NEXT ISSUE Don't miss the next issue. Sign up for our e-news at centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/enews



Coast Connect
29 September 2021




Maintaining services and rates


It is important for us to examine rates again and for our community to make an informed choice about maintaining services and service standards for the future of the Central Coast.

In less than three years' time we will be facing an average annual income loss of \$25.8million over the next seven years and this means we will be forced to reduce or cease many services. We are proposing to make an application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to maintain the current level of rates for a further seven years, consistent with what we asked for from IPART earlier this year.

[Read more](#)



Coast Connect
24 November 2021




Survey now open and Open Office sessions still remaining for 2021!

Released online this week is the ability for members of the community to have their say about maintaining current service levels and rates through an online survey on yourvoiceourcoast.com


Council delivers a range of services for our community including patrolling beaches; maintaining public wharves; fixing suburban traffic issues, filling potholes; cleaning public toilet blocks, care and maintenance of parks, reserves; environmental programs; delivering libraries, childcare and recreation centres, theatres and public pools, to name a few.

I encourage the community to read the information materials and tell us what services you value.

To date, I've held four open sessions with members of the community, and I would like to thank those who have taken the time to meet with me. New dates



Coast Connect
3 November 2021



Administrator open office sessions

Our financial recovery is on track and we want to ensure if a new Council is elected in 2022, they are in the best position to make decisions for the whole community. To help achieve this, we are examining rates beyond the next three years, and we want our community to make an informed choice about maintaining services and service standards for the future of the Central Coast.

I am proposing to make an application to IPART to maintain the current level of rates for a further seven years, consistent with what we asked for earlier this year. This will allow us to maintain current service levels, continue to find more service efficiencies and pay back loans.

As part of the process, we need to understand the level of support from our community for this approach and work with our community to prioritise which services to retain, which ones to reduce and which ones to cease if the rate increase is not maintained.



Have Your Say On Maintaining Services and Rates

Hey Teresa,

Council is now back on track financially meeting all major milestones and targets in its recovery plan. We have taken cost management measures including staff reductions, spending restrictions, asset sales and reducing capital works.

Maintaining rates at current levels is now an important matter for the community to consider. This is because maintaining rates will allow Council to maintain current service levels, continue to find more service efficiencies and pay back loans that were obtained to reimburse the restricted funds spent unlawfully on projects benefitting the community.

If the current rates are not maintained beyond June 2024, Council will have an average annual income loss of \$25.8 million. This means we will need to reduce or cease many services.

Council is proposing to make an application to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to maintain the current level of rates for a further seven years beyond June 2024, consistent with what Council asked for earlier this year.

For more information about what Council has done to remedy its financial situation, what other options have been considered and what this means for your rates and Council services, read the [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

Have your say by completing the online survey at yourvoiceourcoast.com by 13 December 2021.

[Take me there](#)



Council's financial recovery plan hits another milestone

Council is on track to deliver its planned \$50million asset sales program as part of its financial recovery, ending the calendar year with settled sales of \$34,738,775. Value has also been delivered back to the community with the sale of properties to date achieving just over \$10million above their market valuations.

Our financial recovery plan put in place in November 2020 is working and we are hitting all milestones and targets. Together with the cost reduction measures, tightened budget management controls, asset sales and a focus on productivity gains, we are doing everything we can to ensure the organisation's financial sustainability.

Council has been consulting with the community about its proposal to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) in February 2022 to maintain the current ordinary rate for an additional seven years, or ten years in total through to June 2031. Consultation runs through to January 2022 and has included direct communication to 120,000 ratepayers, online information, community group meetings, community surveys, and feedback on services and options through a Community Reference Group and business leaders' meeting. The next stage is to seek community feedback through the public exhibition of the Long Term Financial Plan and Delivery Program. This will be considered at the Extraordinary Council Meeting on 20 December 2021.

[Find out more](#)

Phase 3 – Public exhibition IP&R documents

Media Release Monday, 13 December 2021

Council to hold extraordinary meeting 20 December 2021

Central Coast Council will hold an extraordinary meeting 20 December 2021 in accordance with Section 366 of the Local Government Act 1993.

Date: Monday 20 December 2021

Time: 4pm

Location: Wyong Council Chambers

Agenda items:

1. Adoption to exhibit the following Integrated planning and Reporting documents:
 - Revised Community Strategic Plan
 - Draft Delivery Program 2022-2025 (including Operational Plan 2022-23)
 - Draft Resourcing Strategy, including Draft Long Term Financial Plan, Draft Workforce Management Strategy, and Revised Asset Management Strategy
2. Investment Report for November 2021
3. Monthly Finance Report – November 2021
4. Council Sales Update

There will be a Public Forum but no Open Forum for this Extraordinary Meeting. Community members wishing to speak to an agenda item as part of the Public Forum should follow the standard procedure as outlined on Council's website centralcoast.nsw.gov.au

This meeting will be publicly webcast.

Members of the public will be permitted to attend Chambers. However, the attendance will be limited to meet requirements of the Public Health order, attendees must wear masks, QR code sign in and show proof of COVID vaccination.
ENDS

Media Release Monday, 20 December 2021

Council takes next step towards Special Variation submission and invites community to have their say

Council's draft Revised Community Strategic Plan, Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan, Draft Fees and Charges, Draft Long Term Financial Plan, Draft Workforce Management Strategy, and Draft Revised Asset Management Strategy will be on public exhibition and available for community submissions until Friday 21 January 2022, following adoption at today's Extraordinary Council Meeting.

This is a step required by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) should Council make a submission to IPART for a Special Variation. The documents reflect Council's situation, identify the need to apply for a Special Variation and outline scenarios that are available.

Administrator Rik Hart said Council has considered five scenarios and included three scenarios in the Long Term Financial Plan for the community to review and comment on the implications outlined for each scenario.

"I encourage ratepayers and residents to review the materials and consider what is required for their Council's long-term path to financial sustainability," Mr Hart said.

“The Delivery Program includes actions and projects that Council will deliver over the next three financial years and incorporates Council’s continued actions to reduce expenditure through efficiency gains and moderate adjustments to service levels.

“Council’s financial recovery plan put in place at the end of last year is working and we are meeting all major milestones and targets.

“Through our community consultation about options for services, 82% of survey respondents want Council’s overall service investment to remain the same or more and 73% would like to see investment in new assets remain the same or increase.

“The consultation also shows that the community’s view is split on whether to extend the existing Special Variation or reduce services. Many have also made comment that Council should be held responsible for its financial situation and I have further explained the actions taken by Council in an explanatory video,” Mr Hart said.

Council has also amended the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) to acknowledge the community’s sentiment and Council’s commitment to financial sustainability.

Council will consider community submissions from the public exhibition of the plans in a Council Meeting on 3 February next year before adopting these plans and programs. Council will also formally decide at that meeting if it will make a submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for the current 15% Special Variation (including rate peg) to be maintained in the rate base for an additional seven years, or ten years in total.

To view the Administrator’s video explaining the timeline of actions taken in response to Council’s financial situation, go to the Administrator page on Council’s website.

The plans plus information materials about the impacts to rates and services will be available from Wednesday 22 December at yourvoiceourcoast.com. The plans will be open for public submissions until Friday 21 January 2022.

ENDS

Media Release, Thursday 20 January 2022

Final days to have your say on plans for the future

Ratepayers, residents and businesses are encouraged to have their say, as to what is needed for Council’s long term financial sustainability with plans on public exhibition until this Friday 21 January.

There are three scenarios outlined in Council’s draft Revised Community Strategic Plan, Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan, Draft Fees and Charges, Draft Long Term Financial Plan, Draft Workforce Management Strategy, and Draft Revised Asset Management Strategy for the community to consider with the potential impacts of each scenario also outlined in the strategic documents.

This is a step required by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) should Council make a submission to IPART for a Special Variation.

Administrator Rik Hart said a Special Variation submission was one of the last steps for Council in its planned financial recovery.

“Council’s financial recovery plan put in place over a year ago is working and we are meeting all major milestones and targets,” Mr Hart said.

“The draft Delivery Program that is on public exhibition includes actions and projects that Council will deliver over the next three financial years and incorporates Council’s continued actions to reduce expenditure through efficiency gains and moderate adjustments to service levels.

“Our focus remains on being able to support this community with services they deserve and need by having a financially sustainable Council,” Mr Hart said.

Council will consider community submissions from the public exhibition of the plans in an Extraordinary Council Meeting on 3 February 2022 before adopting these plans and programs. Council will also formally decide at that meeting if it will make a submission to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) for the current 15% Special Variation (including rate peg) to be maintained in the rate base for an additional seven years, or ten years in total.

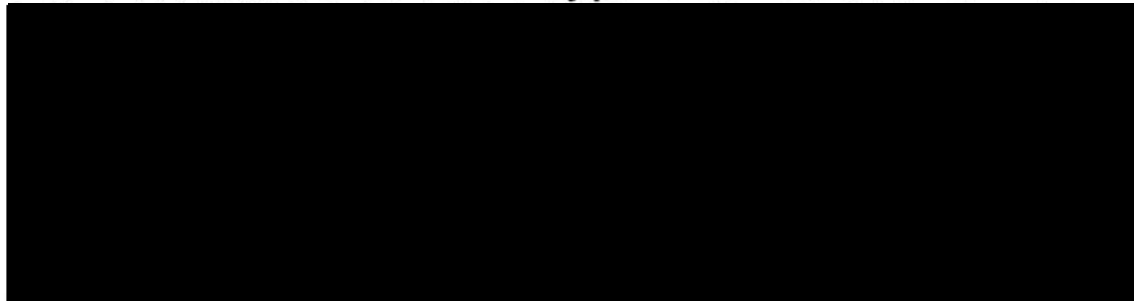
The plans plus information materials about the impacts to rates and services are available at yourvoiceourcoast.com. The plans will be open for public submissions until Friday 21 January 2022.

ENDS

Media coverage, December 2021 and January 2022

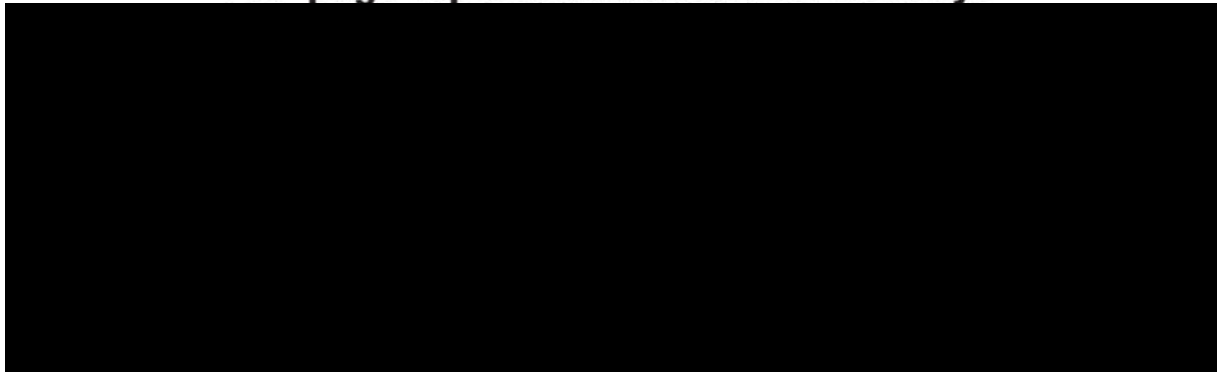
Coast Community Chronicle, 22 December 2021

Amended community plan on exhibition



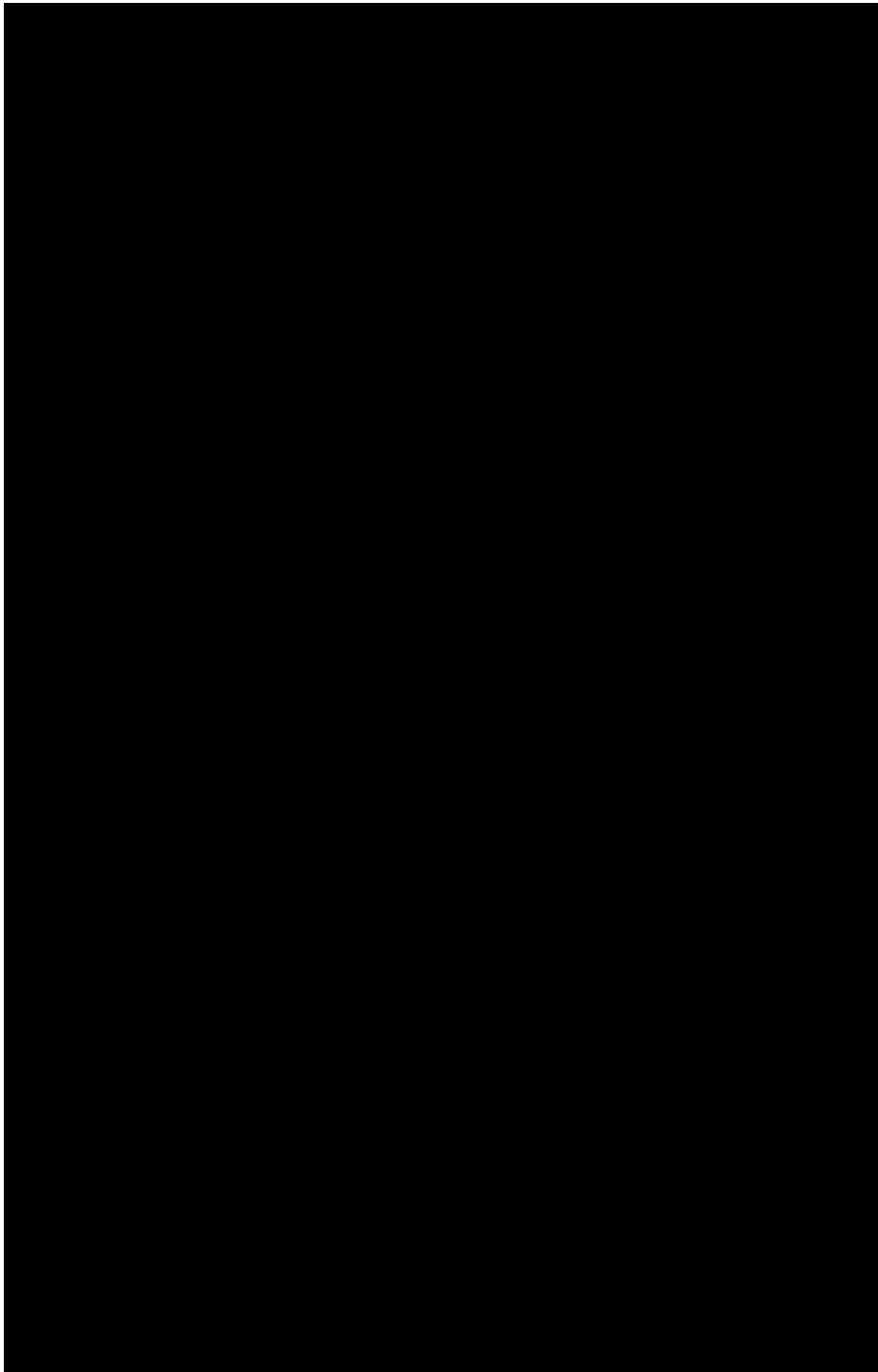
Coast Community News, 24 December 2021

700-page reports exhibited over holidays



[Newslocal](#) > [Central Coast](#)

Central Coast Council: Five scenarios revealed for long term financial failure or success



The revised documents, on public exhibition until January 21, include the draft Community Strategic Plan, Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan, Draft Fees and Charges, Draft Long Term Financial Plan, Draft Workforce Management Strategy, and Draft Revised Asset Management Strategy.

Inside the draft delivery program, as part of the long-term financial plan, are five scenarios that have the potential to play out over the next 10 years, however two have not been budgeted.

The council says this scenario “represents council’s preferred long-term path to financial sustainability.”



Central Coast Council is exploring all scenarios including plans to extend the rate rise beyond three years.

Deteriorate scenario

This scenario forecasts a significant reduction or cancellation of council services in the case where the council is not granted a rate rise extension.

“This scenario compromises the community, council’s service delivery and the community’s ability to secure a respectable standard of living by hacking Council into a shadow of its former size and community capability,” the report states.

“The community and its standard of living will significantly decline, and this would manifest in the deterioration of assets, visual reduced amenity of the coast, decline in social support and community programs and reduced resourcing capacity of the organisation with flow on impacts to the broader economic profile of the region.”

Enhance scenario

This scenario, which results in improved and increased community services, is not forecasted as it would require more than a 15 per cent rate increase.

The council says “taking into consideration the community’s anger and frustration surrounding council’s financial situation, a decision was made to only focus on maintaining council’s financial sustainability and securing the emergency loans repayments, rather than

forecasting an increase in council’s services, which will cost more.”

Less than seven years' extension scenario

This scenario explores IPART granting an extended rate rise, however for less than seven years.

The council states this scenario has not been projected "as it will limit council's ability to fix the repayment terms of the emergency loans for the remaining seven years.

"This indecisiveness will hit a permanent pause for the community and council's staff, as it will prevent council from securing its loan repayment capacity and as a result will keep the community and staff on edge to go through another SV application or face major redundancies and service reductions. This is not a conducive landscape for council and the community to move on."

Mr Hart has made it clear the council will not increase the ordinary residential rate, with the only annual increase to come from IPART's rate cap.

"We are talking about maintaining the rate," he said.

"Some people think it's another 15 per cent increase year upon year. Have a look at the top line of your rates notice. The residential rate – that's what we are asking you to continue to pay to retain your current level of service. If IPART don't accept it, it will remove \$26 million and we will start cutting costs.

"I encourage ratepayers and residents to review the materials and consider what is required for their council's long-term path to financial sustainability."

He said the council was tracking well financially, stating that as of November the council had paid off its \$200 million debt for the unlawful use of restricted funds.

The documents on exhibition will return to the council at its February 3, 2022, meeting where the council will formally decide if it will make an application to IPART for the current 15 per cent rate rise to be extended for seven or 10 years.

More Coverage

[One death and another record day for Covid cases](#)


[The 2021 developments transforming the coast](#)

Social media: 23 December 2021 and 5, 19 January 2022

Central Coast Council Published by HubSpot • January 5 at 2:09 PM •

Have your say on Council's plans for long term financial sustainability. Key plans including revised draft Community Strategic Plan and the Delivery Program outlining what will be delivered over the next three financial years are now open for public submissions. The plans reflect Council's financial situation and identify scenarios and the proposal to maintain current rates.

Submissions close on 21 January 2022. ... [See more](#)




9,099 People reached 408 Engagements -1.1x average Distribution score [Boost post](#)

5 Shares

Central Coast Council Published by HubSpot • December 23, 2021 at 2:08 PM •

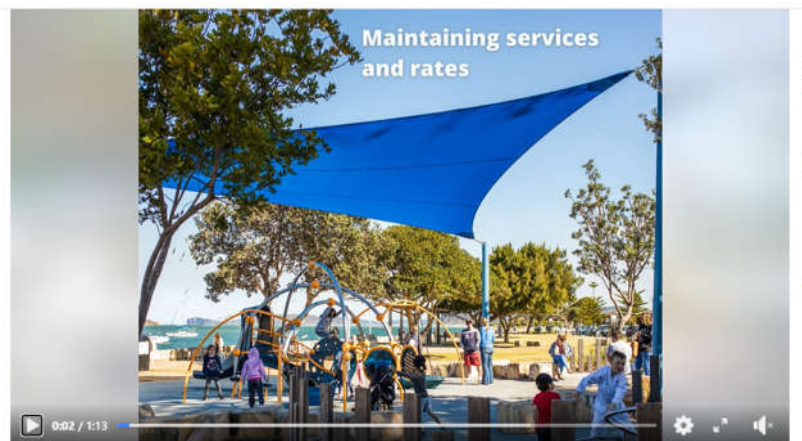
Have your say on Council's plans for long term financial sustainability. Key plans including revised draft Community Strategic Plan and the Delivery Program outlining what will be delivered over the next three financial years are now open for public submissions. The plans reflect Council's financial situation and identify scenarios and the proposal to maintain current rates.

Submissions close on 21 January 2022. Find out more and have your say here: <https://hubs.la/Q0117mXt0>



4,283 People reached 29 Engagements - Distribution score [Boost post](#)

5



Final days to have your say on plans for the future. 🗨️ Ratepayers, resid...

Like Comment Share

4 · 2 comments · 1.8K views

Facebook.

19 January 2022,
with supporting
short video and
links to IP&R
documents on
public exhibition at
yourvoiceourcoast.
com

← Tweet

Final days to have your say on plans for the future and what is needed for Council's long term financial sustainability. Plans on public exhibition until this Fri 21 Jan.

hubs.la/Q012k_qj0

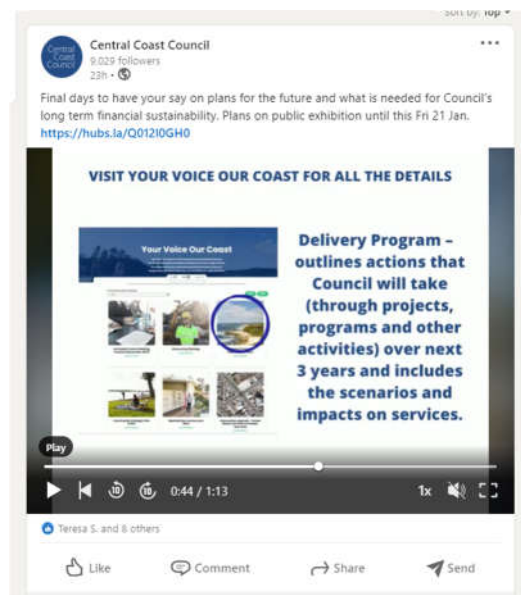
Council's financial recovery plan put in place in October 2020 has been successfully executed and we have met all major milestones and targets in this recovery plan.

Now, we are proposing to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to maintain the current level of services and rates for an additional seven years until the 2030/31 financial year.

84 views

0:17 / 1:13

4:19 pm · 18 Jan 2022 · HubSpot



Twitter and Linked-In, 19 January 2022



Have your say on Council's plans for long term financial sustainability

Council invites ratepayers and residents to consider what is needed for Council's long term path to financial sustainability by reviewing plans now available on public exhibition. The draft revised Community Strategic Plan, Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan, Draft Fees and Charges, Draft Long Term Financial Plan, Draft Workforce Management Strategy, and Draft Revised Asset Management Strategy will be available for community submissions until Friday 21 January 2022.

This is a step required by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) should Council make a submission to IPART for a Special Variation. The documents reflect Council's situation and identify the need to apply for a Special Variation. Council has considered five scenarios and included three scenarios in the Long Term Financial Plan for the community to review and comment on the implications outlined for each scenario.

The Delivery Program includes actions and projects that Council will deliver over the next three financial years and incorporates Council's continued actions to reduce expenditure through efficiency gains and moderate adjustments to service levels.


More information <https://www.yourvoicetocouncil.com/servicesandrates>

[yourvoicetocouncil.com](https://www.yourvoicetocouncil.com)

Central Coast Council

Central Coast Council

Coast Connect
22 December 2021



Next step towards IPART submission

Council invites ratepayers and residents to consider what is needed for Council's long term path to financial sustainability by reviewing plans now available on public exhibition. The draft revised Community Strategic Plan, Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan, Draft Fees and Charges, Draft Long Term Financial Plan, Draft Workforce Management Strategy, and Draft Revised Asset Management Strategy will be available for community submissions until Friday 21 January 2022.


This is a step required by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) should Council make a submission to IPART for a Special Variation. The documents reflect Council's situation and identify the need to apply for a Special Variation. Council has considered five scenarios and included three in the Long Term Financial Plan for the community to review and comment on the implications outlined for each scenario.

The Delivery Program includes actions and projects that Council will deliver over the next three financial years and incorporates Council's continued actions to reduce expenditure through efficiency gains and moderate adjustments to service levels.

[More information](#)

Central Coast Council

Coast Connect
20 January 2022



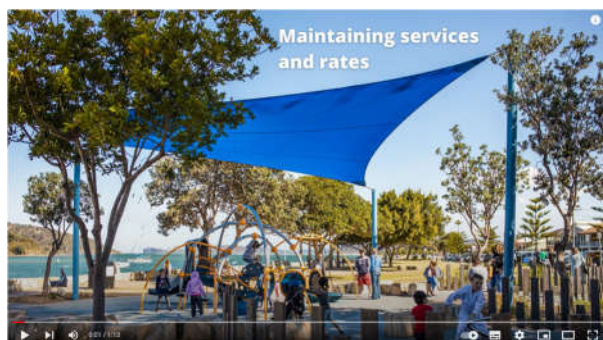
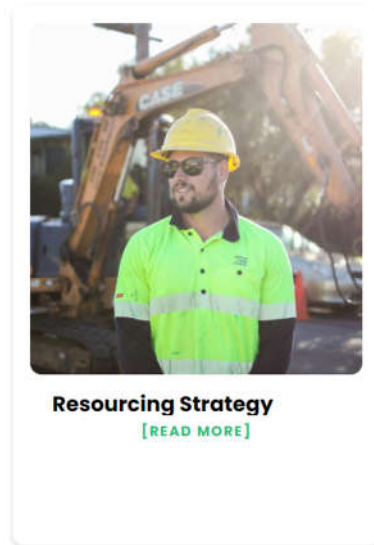
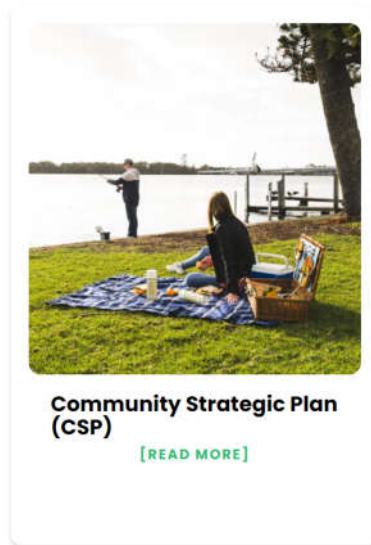
Next Step towards IPART submission

Final opportunity for ratepayers and residents to have their say, as to what is needed for Council's long term financial sustainability with plans on public exhibition only until this Friday 21 January. The draft revised Community Strategic Plan, Draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan, Draft Fees and Charges, Draft Long Term Financial Plan, Draft Workforce Management Strategy, and Draft Revised Asset Management Strategy are available for community submissions until this Friday.

This is a step required by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) should Council make a submission to IPART for a Special Variation. The documents reflect Council's situation and identify the need to apply for a Special Variation. Council has considered five scenarios and included three in the Long Term Financial Plan for the community to review and comment on the implications outlined for each scenario.

The Delivery Program includes actions and projects that Council will deliver over the next three financial years and incorporates Council's continued actions to reduce expenditure through efficiency gains and moderate adjustments to service levels.

[More information](#)



Council's financial recovery plan put in place in October 2020 has been successfully executed and we have met all major milestones and targets in this recovery plan.

Now, we are proposing to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to maintain the current level of services and rates for an additional seven years until the 2030/31 financial year.



YOUR RATES - NOW AND PROPOSED

RESIDENTIAL

Average annual rates	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32
BASELINE/DETERIORATE SCENARIO												
Residential	\$1,101	\$1,267	\$1,280	\$1,312	\$1,193	\$1,223	\$1,253	\$1,285	\$1,317	\$1,350	\$1,383	\$1,418
Average annual increase		\$166	\$13	\$32	(\$119)	\$30	\$31	\$31	\$32	\$33	\$34	\$35
Average weekly increase		\$0.20	\$0.24	\$0.62	(\$2.28)	\$0.57	\$0.59	\$0.60	\$0.62	\$0.63	\$0.65	\$0.67
MAINTAIN SV SCENARIO												
Residential	\$1,101	\$1,267	\$1,280	\$1,312	\$1,345	\$1,378	\$1,412	\$1,448	\$1,484	\$1,521	\$1,559	\$1,618
Average annual increase		\$166	\$13	\$32	\$33	\$34	\$34	\$35	\$36	\$37	\$38	(\$147)
Average weekly increase		\$0.20	\$0.24	\$0.62	\$0.63	\$0.65	\$0.66	\$0.68	\$0.70	\$0.71	\$0.73	(\$7.72)

What this would mean is the increase that you received in July 2021 in the ordinary rate would continue for a further seven years. It does not mean a further increase above the rate peg.

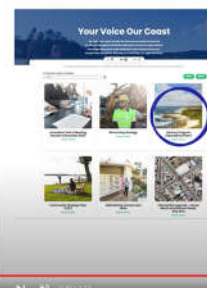


VISIT YOUR VOICE OUR COAST FOR ALL THE DETAILS



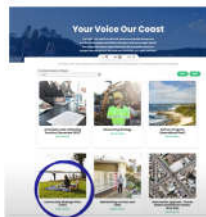
Resourcing Strategy - outlines the 10 year financial plan, asset management and workforce resourcing.

VISIT YOUR VOICE OUR COAST FOR ALL THE DETAILS



Delivery Program - outlines actions that Council will take (through projects, programs and other activities) over next 3 years and includes the scenarios and impacts on services.

VISIT YOUR VOICE OUR COAST FOR ALL THE DETAILS



Community Strategic Plan – has been updated to include Council's financial situation and commitment to financial responsibility on behalf of the community.

VISIT YOUR VOICE OUR COAST FOR ALL THE DETAILS



Maintaining Rates and Services – includes a Rates Brochure that explains what is proposed, fact sheets and frequently asked questions.

READ OUR REVISED DRAFT PLANNING DOCUMENTS TO UNDERSTAND THE DETAILS



HAVE YOUR SAY

The proposal is on public exhibition from until Friday 21 January 2022.

We look forward to hearing your feedback via
Email to ask@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au
Post to Central Coast Council
Subject: Maintaining rates and services
PO Box 20
WYONG NSW 2259



BASELINE SCENARIO – CATASTROPHIC / BANKRUPTCY IMPACT

This scenario maintains the current, baseline service levels and keeps the status quo of annual expenditure, while sustaining an unmitigated \$25.8M annual loss in Special Variation (SV) revenue, which is lost from Council's revenue base at the end of 2023-24. This is a theoretical scenario only and has been presented because of the requirement for Council to show a status quo scenario, meaning maintaining current services at current levels. Council notes this scenario cannot be operationalised because Council cannot sustain seven years of operational deficits, as it has an insufficient unrestricted cash buffer to sustain such a protracted loss-making operation. This scenario, however, clearly shows the significant quantum of annual deficits generated by changing nothing, other than losing the annual SV. This scenario is unsustainable and sets Council on a pathway towards bankruptcy.

MAINTAIN SV SCENARIO – FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE IMPACT

This scenario projects the maintenance of the current rate base, which contains the one-off 15% SV that was implemented in 2021-22. This scenario embeds millions of dollars in annual productivity savings by growing annual expenditure at significantly lower levels than inflation. This scenario represents the continuation of the successfully implemented Recovery Plan and it satisfies Council's debt responsibilities associated with the principal and interest repayments of the \$150M in emergency loans and all other Council debt. The maintenance and/or improvement of current service levels reflects the vast majority of the community sentiment, as canvassed in a statistically representative community survey sample and it represents Council's preferred long-term path to financial sustainability.

DETERIORATE SCENARIO – DISTRESSED COMMUNITY IMPACT

This scenario projects a significant reduction and/or cessation of many of Council's services in order to compensate for the loss of SV revenue at the end of 2023-24. This scenario compromises the community, Council's service delivery and the community's ability to secure a respectable standard of living. This will severely impact many services that the community value and particularly impact community groups and organisations who rely on funding and services from Council. This scenario is in direct opposition to the vast majority of the community's sentiment who are wanting to maintain or increase current service levels, as canvassed in a statistically representative community survey sample. The impacts of the projected service reductions are summarised over the page. The community and its standard of living will significantly decline, and this would manifest in the deterioration of assets, visual reduced amenity of the Coast, decline in a social support and community programs and reduced resourcing capacity of the organisation with flow on impacts to the broader economic profile of the region. This option is not only not reflective of the community's sentiment but also it is not in the best interest of the community.

ENHANCE SCENARIO – IMPROVED SERVICES IMPACT

A scenario projecting for improved and / or increased community services is not forecast because such a scenario will require a much larger than the current SV rate continuation. Taking into consideration the community's anger and frustration surrounding Council's financial situation, a decision was made to only focus on maintaining Council's financial sustainability and securing the emergency loans repayments, rather than forecasting an increase in Council's services, which will cost more.

LESS THAN SEVEN YEARS EXTENSION SCENARIO – COMMUNITY DESTABILISING IMPACT

A scenario projecting another temporary SV application of less than the requested seven years has not been projected as it will limit Council's ability to fix the repayment terms of the emergency loans for the remaining seven years. This indecisiveness will hit a permanent pause for the community and Council's staff, as it will prevent Council from securing its loan repayment capacity and as a result will keep the community and staff on edge to go through another SV application or face major redundancies and service reductions. This is not a conducive landscape for Council and the community to move on.

ADMINISTRATOR MESSAGE

Council's financial recovery plan put in place in October 2020 has been successfully executed and we have met all major milestones and targets in this recovery plan.

Our financial recovery is on track, and we are taking every possible action to ensure this continues. We are committed to doing better and regaining your trust.

We have done as much as we can behind the scenes to reduce costs including focusing on productivity improvements which should have been realised as part of the 2016 merger of Gosford and Wyong Councils but were not. These included improving internal systems, processes, equipment and better management of staff time.

We are proposing to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to maintain the current level of rates for an additional seven years until the 2030/31 financial year. What this would mean is the increase that you received in July 2021 in the ordinary rate would continue for a further seven years. It does not mean a further increase above the rate peg.

IPART approved a temporary rate increase, called a special variation (SV), of 15% (including the 2% rate peg) in May 2021 for three years from 2021/22 financial year to 2023/24. We are proposing to apply to maintain this for a further seven years, so 10 years in total.

The proposal has been incorporated into the draft Revised Community Strategic Plan, draft Delivery Program and Operational Plan, draft Fees and Charges, draft Long Term Financial Plan, draft Workforce Management Strategy, and draft Revised Asset Management Strategy and these are now on public exhibition and available for community submissions until Friday 21 January 2022.

This is a step required by IPART should Council make a submission to IPART for a Special Variation. The documents reflect Council's situation, identify the need to apply for a Special Variation and outline scenarios that are available.

Council has considered five scenarios and included three scenarios in the draft Long Term Financial Plan for the community to review and comment on the implications outlined for each scenario.

I encourage ratepayers and residents to review the materials and consider what is required for their Council's long-term path to financial sustainability.

The draft Delivery Program includes actions and projects that Council will deliver over the next three financial years and incorporates Council's continued actions to reduce expenditure through efficiency gains and moderate adjustments to service levels.

Council has also amended the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) to acknowledge the community's sentiment and Council's commitment to financial sustainability.

Council will consider community submissions from the public exhibition period in a Council Meeting on 3 February 2022 before adopting these plans and programs. Council will also formally decide at that meeting if it will make a submission to IPART for the current 15% SV (including rate peg) to be maintained in the rate base for a further seven years, resulting in ten years in total.

WHAT ARE WE PROPOSING

There are three scenarios for the community to consider in the draft Delivery Program (including Operational Plan) for the 2022-23, 2023-24, 2024-25 financial years. There are two descriptions for scenarios that were developed and were not considered as viable options.



WHAT WILL SERVICE REDUCTIONS LOOK LIKE

If Council's SV is not maintained, we will need to significantly change how we provide services to the Central Coast community to reduce expenditure by \$25.8 million each year. This means that we will need to reduce, change or cease the services we provide to the community including:

- reducing annual funding for some partnerships and community education programs
- reducing patrols at some beaches and baths
- stopping proactive investigation and repairs of roads, drains, potholes, shared paths, footpaths
- outsourcing some services to private operators
- selling some community facilities, parks and reserves
- reducing community grants
- reducing destination marketing and tourism industry services and economic development services
- removing some playgrounds, wharves and jetties
- reducing roadside mowing in public areas and grass laneways
- limiting contracted town centre services and placemaking activities
- stopping proactive traffic management
- ceasing coordination of volunteer programs
- reducing water quality monitoring of rivers, waterways, beaches and estuaries
- increasing wait times for customer, councillor, MP enquiries
- reducing the hours of operation, cleaning and maintenance of some community facilities including public toilets
- reducing the dredging program of The Entrance channel
- reducing major events and only delivering events in areas where a business special rate is collected – The Entrance, Gosford, Wyong and Toukley
- reducing asset management, beach cleaning, bushland maintenance, biosecurity, weed spraying
- increasing wait times for internal services including IT, trades, purchasing, stores
- reducing library programs, ranger services, graffiti removal
- reducing planning, maintenance and renewal of road, footpaths, drainage, street lighting
- leasing more of our facilities to community or commercial operators
- increasing response times for traffic and safety issues, approvals permits, signage and line marking
- increasing processing times for urban planning and development applications

RATES – NOW AND PROPOSED

These tables show the average annual rates for a Central Coast resident for the next 10 years. There are two scenarios shown:

- **baseline/deteriorate** which is the current rates approved by IPART with a special variation applied for three years ending at the end of 2023/24.
 - **maintain** which is the proposed rates with the special variation extended for an additional seven years from 2024/25, to 10 years in total.
- It is important to understand that the 15% increase approved by IPART has been applied to the rating income Council is permitted to levy and collect in 2021-22. Increases in subsequent years are capped at the IPART determined annual rate peg. In our forecasting this is estimated to be 2.5% under with IPART's SV application assumptions.

RESIDENTIAL

Average annual rates	2020-21	2021-22*	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	2029-30	2030-31	2031-32
BASILINE/DETERIORATE SCENARIO												
Residential	\$1,101	\$1,267	\$1,280	\$1,312	\$1,193	\$1,223	\$1,253	\$1,285	\$1,317	\$1,350	\$1,383	\$1,418
Average annual increase		\$166	\$13	\$32	(\$119)	\$30	\$31	\$31	\$32	\$33	\$34	\$35
Average weekly increase		\$3.20	\$0.24	\$0.62	(\$2.28)	\$0.57	\$0.59	\$0.60	\$0.62	\$0.63	\$0.65	\$0.67
MAINTAIN SV SCENARIO												
Residential	\$1,101	\$1,267	\$1,280	\$1,312	\$1,345	\$1,378	\$1,413	\$1,448	\$1,484	\$1,521	\$1,559	\$1,418
Average annual increase		\$166	\$13	\$32	\$33	\$34	\$34	\$35	\$36	\$37	\$38	(\$141)
Average weekly increase		\$3.20	\$0.24	\$0.62	\$0.63	\$0.65	\$0.66	\$0.68	\$0.70	\$0.71	\$0.73	(\$2.72)

*2021-22 increase (including rate peg) applied in July 2021

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Financial Summary	2022-23		2023-24		2024-25		2024-25	
	\$ million		\$ million		\$ million		\$ million	
Operating income	636,496		641,388		649,909		625,696	
Operating expenditure*	596,733		605,292		617,542		593,393	
Net operating result (excluding capital grants and contributions)	39,763		36,076		32,367		32,303	
Capital grants and contributions	81,530		62,425		57,565		57,565	
Net operating result (including capital grant and contributions)	121,293		98,521		89,932		89,867	

*Includes net interest revenue and expense

WHAT HAVE WE HEARD FROM THE COMMUNITY SO FAR

- 82% of respondents want overall service investment to remain the same or more.
- Individual service that had the highest level of support for service reduction, still had 64% of respondents identifying they wanted the same or more investment for that service.
- 73% of respondents would like to see investment in new assets remain the same (47%) or increase (26%).
- Of the online survey respondents who wanted to reduce services, 31% indicated that they would like Council to invest less on services generally, which means 69% would like Council to invest the same or more on services generally.
- Respondents were split when asked to choose their preference for either extending the existing Special Variation or reducing services.
- 1 in 2 respondents made some comment that Council should be held responsible for its financial situation.
- More work can be done to improve the community's overall satisfaction with the quality of services delivered with an average score of 3.31 out of 5.



FIND OUT MORE

Visit yourvoiceourcoast.com/servicesandrates to find out more about Council's draft Delivery Program and the SV proposal includes a video summary of the proposal, fact sheets and frequently asked questions.

HAVE YOUR SAY

The proposal is on public exhibition from Wednesday 22 December 2021 to Friday 21 January 2022. We look forward to hearing your feedback via

- Email to ask@centralcoast.nsw.gov.au
- Post to Central Coast Council
Subject: Maintaining rates and services
PO Box 20
WYONG NSW 2259



Maintaining services and rates

In the October quarterly newsletter, I outlined a proposal to apply to the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to maintain the current level of rates for an additional seven years until the 2030/31 financial year. What this would mean is the 15% increase (including rate peg) that you received in July 2021 in the ordinary rate would remain in rates for a further seven years, resulting in ten years in total. It does not mean a further rate increase above the rate peg and there is no 15% increase every year. The rates will only increase by the rate peg given by IPART annually.

Over the last three months Council has consulted with the community to understand whether we should be investing more, less or the same in services we provide to the community and has also sought feedback on the potential impacts of different rate scenarios on Council's long term financial sustainability. I have heard from ratepayers, community organisations, sporting groups and business owners through my open office meetings during this time too. Thank you to everyone who has taken the time to contribute to this very important matter.

Securing the current rate income for a further seven years means that we can maintain current service levels, as we continue to find more service efficiencies and pay back the loans that are part of our financial recovery plan. This plan put in place over a year ago is working and we are meeting all major milestones and targets.

Our focus remains on being able to support the Central Coast community with the services they deserve and need by having a financially sustainable Council.

To keep up to date about this proposal to maintain services and rates, including information about any further opportunities to provide feedback, go online to yourvoiceourcoast.com/servicesandrates

Rik Hart, Administrator



Financial recovery update

We are serious about helping to fix the problem. Here is what we have done so far.

Reduced spending

- ✓ Capital works program reduced to \$175M in 2020-21 compared to \$242M in 2019-20
- ✓ Materials and contracts costs reduced by \$20M
- ✓ Employee costs reduced by \$30M
- ✓ Management salaries reduced: 9 Directors to 5 and senior managers from 38 to 25

Better financial management and accountability

- ✓ Tighter budget management controls
- ✓ Monthly financial reporting publicly available at centralcoast.nsw.gov.au
- ✓ Chief Financial Officer appointment
- ✓ Audit and Risk Committee meet every two months

Other financial recovery actions

- ✓ Over \$60M of property assets sold
- ✓ Improved productivity with minimum service level reduction despite staffing reductions
- ✓ Bank loans secured and payments on track

Keep up to date with Council news

Coast Connect e-newsletter

Sign up for information, events and programs delivered weekly to your inbox.
centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/enews



Social media

Follow us on social media for the very latest on Council services, programs and important information during an emergency.



Contact us

- Online Customer Service Centre at centralcoast.nsw.gov.au
- Telephone: 1300 463 954

January 2022

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